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A LEGACY SINCE 1864

The Romanian Armed Forces road to modernity started in 1859, once the United Principalities General Staff Corps, currently the Defence Staff, was established.

Soon after it, in 1864, a group of nine captains, graduates of the first series of the Officer Cadet School in Bucharest, took the initiative to develop a *"military science, art and history journal"* named *"România Militară/Military Romania"*.

The initiators of the publication – **G. Slăniceanu** (Captain, Chief of the Engineer Battalion), **A. Gramont** (Staff Captain), **G. Borănescu** (Engineer Captain), **G. Anghelescu** (Staff Captain), **A. Anghelescu** (Artillery Captain), **E. Arion** (Artillery Captain), **E. Boteanu** (Staff Captain), **E. Pencovici** (Staff Captain) and **C. Barozzi** (Engineer Captain) –, educated not only in Romania but also abroad, were inspired by the necessity to develop a substantial theoretical activity in the Romanian Army too.

The journal manifesto[1], included in the first issue, which appeared on 15 February 1864, contained innovative ideas and approaches that were meant to:

"- contribute to the organisation of our military system the Legislative Chamber is about to decide upon soon;

- assemble and examine the Country old military institutions that had made for the glory of Romania for several centuries and ensured our existence;

- explore, in the absence of any military study, all the aspects related to the Army training, the most solid basis of the armed forces;

- get the Romanian Troops well-informed about the military events in the world;

- join efforts to work concertedly and whole-heartedly to develop and strengthen the edifice that is meant to ensure the future of our country"[2].

"România Militară" was an independent publication, under the aegis of the War Ministry, and it ceased to appear in 1866 as there were no sufficient funds and subscribers. The publication was resumed in 1891, about a quarter of a century later, also as the result of the initiative of a group of officers in the Great General Staff who intended to *"reproduce the serious studies on the organisation, strategy and art of commanding troops under any circumstances"*[3]. Shortly after it, by the Royal Decree no. 3663 issued on 8 December 1897, *"România Militară"* became the *"Great General Staff official publication"*.

[1] *Din trecutul României Militare cu prilejul aniversării a 75 de ani de la apariția ei în viața armatei. 1864-1939*, București, 1939, p. 31.
[2] *Ibidem*, p. 32.
[3] *România Militară*, no. 1, 1981, p. 6.

C. Barozzi
(Engineer Captain)

E. Pencovici
(Staff Captain)

E. Boteanu
(Staff Captain)

G. Borănescu
(Engineer Captain)

G. Anghelescu
(Staff Captain)

A. Gramont
(Staff Captain)

E. Arion
(Artillery Captain)

G. Slăniceanu
(Captain, Chief of the Engineer Battalion)

A. Anghelescu
(Artillery Captain)

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The *GÂNDIREA MILITARĂ ROMÂNEASCĂ*
Journal Awards
are yearly bestowed,
by the Romanian Armed Forces Defence Staff,
on the most valuable works in the field
of military science, published in the previous year

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Constantin Hîrjeu"
Award*

*"Division General
Ştefan Fălcoianu"
Award*

*"Lieutenant Colonel
Mircea Tomescu"
Award*

*"Army Corps
General
Ioan Sichitiu"
Award*

*"Marshal
Alexandru Averescu"
Award*

CONTENTS

TOWARDS A NEW TRANSATLANTIC STRATEGY IN THE BLACK SEA REGION

Major General Remus-Hadrian BONDOR

Chief of Strategic Planning Directorate

*G*lobal strategic environment has changed substantially in recent years, with the emergence of a considerable number of new challenges. One of the factors generating such challenges has been the continuation of the Russian Federation assertive foreign policy, which culminated in the illegal, unjustified and unprovoked invasion of Ukraine. In this context, in the 2022 Madrid Summit Declaration, NATO Heads of State and Government participating in the meeting "condemn Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine in the strongest possible terms. It gravely undermines international security and stability. It is a blatant violation of international law"[1].

The Black Sea region represents an area of maximum strategic interest for Romania. In recent years, it has become the main site of Russian military activity. Russia has repeatedly demonstrated its willingness to use the military instrument to protect and promote its interests in the region, both through land incursions into the sovereign territories of NATO partners and through the use of the Black Sea Fleet and other capabilities to project power in the operations in Syria and in the Mediterranean Sea.

Any kind of tension in this area involves NATO nations and therefore the Alliance's interests, given that three Black Sea littoral countries have the member status and other states in the region have the partner status. On the other hand, maintaining a dominant role in the Black Sea region is an important element of Russia's strategy; however, Western policymakers have been hesitant in paying strategic attention to the Black Sea region before Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022. This aspect should undergo changes in the near future, as the security of the Black Sea region is a complex issue with multiple Euro-Atlantic implications and significant global impact, particularly with regard to the rules-based international order favouring human rights, humanitarian intervention and promotion of democratic values.

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[1] Madrid Summit Declaration, issued by NATO Heads of State and Government participating in the meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Madrid 29 June 2022, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_196951.htm, retrieved on 19 April 2023.

Different Views and Approaches in the Baltic Sea Area and the Black Sea Area

The Black Sea region is one of the key areas where international actors are involved in the configuration of new power centres. NATO nations border former Soviet states that Russia claims to be in its sphere of influence. Moreover, the surface and airspace of the Black Sea were, even before the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022, the environment in which the Russian military and NATO forces interacted on the fringes. In addition to military challenges and geopolitical disruptions, energy resources represent another important factor in describing the strategic environment in the region. The Black Sea is an important transit route for such resources, especially natural gas. Transit routes involve Russia, producers in the Caucasus as it is the case of Azerbaijan, as well as the European market, particularly for natural gas and hydrocarbons. The resulting dependencies have proven to be vulnerabilities, being exploited as a lever of coercion by the leadership in the Kremlin, as energy is a major economic issue for European states. Energy resources as well as existing and future gas and oil distribution routes are perhaps the most important transnational issues, thus affecting almost all bilateral relations in the region.

Regarding the Russian threat, even before the moment of 24 February 2022, it can be stated that the Baltic states and Poland shared a common perception of it, while the Black Sea NATO member states were generally out of sync in their assessment of the growing presence of Russia in the region. Thus, shortly after the occupation of Crimea, Romania decided to allocate two percent of its GDP for defence, established the Multinational Division Southeast and the NATO Force Integration Unit, at the same time making efforts for the deployment of US and NATO troops on its territory. Instead, Bulgaria emphasized the need for economic cooperation. Ankara preferred, according to a model that has become traditional, focusing on pursuing its own interests, oscillating between competition and cooperation with Moscow. Moreover, to the absence of a single strategic vision for the Black Sea among NATO member states it was added a relatively modest US presence in the region. Before 2022, the United States of America maintained between 500 and 1,000 troops in Romania and Bulgaria, on a rotational basis, but the number was small compared to the American presence in the Baltic region. Additionally, the US maritime footprint in the Black Sea has been inconsistent over the years. After the seizure of Crimea, Washington increased its maritime presence, sending 13 warships to the area in 2014, but two years later, it drastically reduced the number of ships to 5. In 2021, it again increased the presence to 13 ships. Therefore, even after the annexation of Crimea, the Euro-Atlantic Allies failed to impose sufficient costs on Russian expansionism in the region.

Not coincidentally, when in early 2022 Moscow closed the entire north-western part of the Black Sea under the pretext of military exercises, days before the invasion of Ukraine, not a single NATO warship belonging to non-littoral Allies was patrolling in the Black Sea. However, Russia's invasion of Ukraine triggered significant changes in the region's strategic landscape. As the Black Sea emerged as a major frontline in the context of the Kremlin aggression, the factors relevant to the region's importance were reassessed. One of the major consequences of that reassessment was that NATO recognized the imbalances in its defence posture against Russia and responded by establishing a single Allied presence along the entire eastern flank.

NATO Response following Russia's Invasion of Ukraine

Immediately after the invasion of Ukraine by the Russian Federation, the North Atlantic Council decided, for the first time, to activate the Allied defence plans, thus being deployed on the Allied eastern flank, including in Romania, elements of the NATO Very High Readiness Joint Task Force (VJTF). In Romania, the precursor land element of the battalion-level VJTF was deployed, provided by France as the framework nation.

During the extraordinary NATO Summit in Brussels, on 24.03.2022, the Heads of State and Government decided to establish four new battle groups in Bulgaria, Romania, Slovakia and Hungary, to safeguard the security of the Allies, as part of a wider set of measures to strengthen the Allied deterrence and defence posture in the medium and long term.

In Romania, France took over the role of the battle group's framework nation and, in July 2022, started the deployment of the troops of the Battle Group format, which have gradually increased, simultaneously

with the completion of the infrastructure works in the National Joint Training Centre Cincu.

Deterrence and defence measures also include the presence of air defence systems, airspace reconnaissance assets, and multi-role aircraft for air policing and enhanced vigilance missions.

At the same time, the USA has focused its attention on the Black Sea. Washington decided to deploy a divisional command and a brigade of approximately 3,000 troops to Romania. In addition to these reassurance measures, US Congress members advanced a bipartisan legislative proposal – the Black Sea Security Act –, that called on Washington to increase its commitments to countries in the region, increase military assistance and improve coordination with NATO and the EU. If passed, the bill would lay the foundations for a first-of-its-kind US strategy for the Black Sea region.

It is necessary to ensure a substantial agenda for the Vilnius Summit in the current year to advance and strengthen the objectives related to the long-term adaptation of the deterrence and defence posture.

Future Allied decisions and actions related to strengthening this posture, including in the Black Sea region, will be integrated into the wider framework of the implementation of the new NATO Military Strategy, to support the objectives of deterrence and defence of the entire Euro-Atlantic Allied area. These decisions and actions include the adaptation of the Allied response mechanism, a process to which Romania is a party along with all other Allies.

Romania also advocates for strengthening NATO-EU interaction, based on complementarity, mutual support and concrete areas of cooperation, as well as for maintaining and deepening existing partnership formats, with increased focus on political dialogue and provision of assistance to strengthen their resilience.

Russia's aggression has revitalized the defence policies of NATO member states bordering the Black Sea. Within few months since the Russian invasion, Romania pledged to increase defence spending to 2.5% of GDP and completed the procedures for the procurement of F-16 fighter jets. Moreover, there are other ongoing very important procurement programmes: HIMARS, PATRIOT missile systems and man-portable missile air defence systems – MANPAD, Piranhia V armoured personnel carriers, tactical-operational UAS, tanks,

submarines etc. At the same time, Romania contributes equipment and personnel to the NATO battle group in Poland, led by the USA, and, starting in April 2023, it has deployed a detachment of F-16 aircraft to ensure the security of the airspace in the Baltic area.

Similarly, Bulgaria clarified its position on the Russian threat to its security. In January 2022, the neighbours south of the Danube were not convinced of the need for a NATO military presence on their national territory – a position that was reversed only a few weeks later. Sofia has phased out Russian gas imports, signed the deal to modernize its air force with new F-16 jets and hosted the NATO Battle Group, whose framework nation is Italy. Turkey continues to meet its commitments as a NATO member state. Russia's aggression gave Ankara the opportunity to play the role of mediator in negotiating the agreement that lifted the Russian naval blockade on Ukrainian Black Sea ports used for grain exports. Ankara closed the Bosporus Strait to Russian ships, as required by the Montreux Convention. It has also denied transit to all other military vessels.

What Is Next for NATO in the Black Sea?

After years of neglect, Russia's war against Ukraine has encouraged the transatlantic community to change its Black Sea policy. As NATO strengthens its presence in the southeastern flank, the USA places greater strategic value on the region, with the Allies becoming more synergistic and Ukraine exposing weaknesses in Russia's military capabilities.

Maintaining and strengthening the Allies forward presence in the area is the answer expected by Romania and an opportunity for the Alliance to reject Russian expansionism and support regional security, based on the rules and principles of international law, including in the field of freedom of navigation. As any Ally on the eastern flank would recognize, there is no better deterrent against the Russian threat than deployed NATO forces. It is necessary to increase the level of the Battle Group to a brigade-level combat structure and to simultaneously pre-position the necessary equipment and supplies as well as to maintain the presence of US forces at least at the current level.

While the land and air components of NATO's defence posture in the Black Sea region have been improved, the maritime element is insufficient. It thus becomes a necessity for Bulgaria and Romania

to modernize their current fleets of surface vessels and to develop new capabilities. Meanwhile, as the procurement programmes are underway, NATO member states can enhance their maritime presence in the Black Sea. It would be a strong sign of transatlantic unity.

Conclusions

The Black Sea region was and remains an area with strong disparities and different levels of political, economic and social development, with impact on the level of cooperation and integration. Russia's open and unprovoked war in Ukraine, the frozen conflicts in Abkhazia, Ossetia, Nagorno-Karabakh and Transnistria, together with the economic, environmental, migration and illegal trafficking problems are obstacles that prevent the littoral countries as well as those in their near vicinity from capitalizing on their potential for cooperation.

As an organization, NATO is inherently interested in the sovereignty and defence of the Alliance members in the Black Sea region. This is the Alliance's fundamental raison d'être, which must be taken into account in developing a transatlantic strategy for the region. The Russia-Ukraine war has revealed a high degree of cohesion among NATO member and partner states, whose visions of what the Alliance is and how it should respond to threats are largely shared. In the longer term, however, NATO's cohesion will depend on the Allies' success in bringing together their different strategic cultures and threat assessments into a vision of even greater cohesion, synergy and interoperability.

NATO, the EU and the wider transatlantic community have an interest in deterring or resolving as quickly as possible the security challenges affecting the sovereign rights of non-NATO countries in the region. To ensure that the Black Sea region contributes to the overall goal of a free, whole and peaceful Europe, the transatlantic community should have four very clearly defined objectives in mind in developing a security strategy for the Black Sea region, namely:

- *effective deterrence and credible collective defence;*
- *resilience;*
- *stability and security in NATO partner states in the region;*
- *regional economic security, so that no state has the power to use economic and energy resources to coerce other states.*

In this context, resilience is of paramount importance to the Alliance's systemic preparedness. Actions are needed to improve societal and regional resilience. At the same time, our armed forces must adapt and modernize to respond to complex threats. Another element to consider is the concept of integrated deterrence, recently introduced in the US latest national security strategy. Like our adversaries, we must use new domains and emerging technologies, develop our cyber capabilities, and equip our armed forces with state-of-the-art technologies.

A security strategy of the Black Sea region will be feasible if it also addresses, in the same framework, the long-standing problems of the Eastern Balkans, the Caucasus, as well as the conflict in Ukraine. Conceptually, no security strategy for the Black Sea region could pass the test of feasibility unless it integrates the relevant diplomatic, economic and intelligence instruments of power along with the multiple aspects of the military instrument of power. It should address deterrence, resilience, hybrid threats, energy security. Moreover, it should be underpinned by a strong economic component and bilateral and multilateral diplomatic engagements. The resources needed for its implementation should be provided by the countries involved as well as through the involvement of international institutions.

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INTERPRETING THE RUSSIAN WAY OF WAR
– COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF SOVIET MILITARY OPERATIONS WITH PHASE I RUSSIAN OPERATIONS IN UKRAINE –

Mario MARINOV

*PhD Candidate, University of Library Studies and Information Technologies,
Sofia, Republic of Bulgaria*

The following paper provides a comparative analysis of Soviet military operations in Czechoslovakia and Afghanistan and Phase I Russian operations in Ukraine. The principal object of analysis is the employment of military force within the Soviet and later Russian military operational art outside of large-scale doctrinal conventional warfare. The principal thesis of the paper revolves around providing adequate evidence for two core postulations – the Soviet and later Russian militaries have historically relied in the case of escalation and use of conventional military force on the "military operation" as a method to utilise said military force in a low-intensity, non-kinetic approach where large-scale conventional land forces, in combination with airborne and special forces, would rapidly overwhelm an adversary's military and civilian capabilities to offer resistance; first-phase Russian operations in Ukraine in 2022 followed the provided historical model, encompassing all elements and methods previously employed, but were unable to repeat Soviet successes, failing due to a variety of factors, which had previously worked in favour of the Soviet military, but were not sufficiently present or counteracted. The paper conducts a comparative analysis by synthesising the key elements, which make up the matrix of a given "military operation" – political goals, military objectives, preparation and execution, and applies them in each of the three case studies – Czechoslovakia, Afghanistan and Ukraine. By analysing each of these elements, the paper provides proof of the identical approaches used by the Soviet/Russian militaries and also its subsequent conclusions on the inability of the Russian military to achieve success in Ukraine.

Keywords: Russia; Soviet Union; doctrine; military operation; Czechoslovakia; Afghanistan; Ukraine;

INTRODUCTION

The direct implementation of military force stands as a principal instrument of power projection in the toolset of the modern nation-state to fulfil the primary task of ensuring the state's security, as a core tenet to its continued existence. The methods through which this power is implemented vary significantly from one state actor to the other and depend on an array of factors that define and characterise any given nation-state – geography, history, economy, population, ruling elites and, most importantly and combining all others, the historically developed perception of the state, leadership and population on the concept of *"security"* and its provision through the application of military power.

The **principal object of analysis** of the following paper is the implementation of military force within Soviet and later Russian military operational art. In the employment of military force to achieve the political objectives of the Soviet and later Russian states, three methodological approaches and concepts can be differentiated in the contemporary era. The first encompasses the large-scale activation of all military forces available to the state in the event of a total war against an adversary of equal or greater power. This can be termed the *"doctrinal"* warfare approach within Russian military thinking and involves the utilisation of all available means, both conventional and non-conventional, such as the use of tactical and strategic nuclear means. It also involves the large-scale mobilisation of the population and economy in conducting warfare across multiple fronts and theatres. The second is the concept of the limited *"military operation"*, which involves the usage of limited available military resources and standing operational military groupings, supplanted by special operations forces and security services, against singular adversaries near Russia's territory (Russia's perceived sphere of influence). Such *"military operations"* attempt to utilise available resources in a high-risk/high-reward-type scenario, where military forces are deployed against sole adversaries to provide a quick political outcome

In the employment of military force to achieve the political objectives of the Soviet and later Russian states, three methodological approaches and concepts can be differentiated in the contemporary era: the "doctrinal" warfare, the "military operation" and utilisation of military resources.

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through conventional military means, without engaging in large-scale and prolonged kinetic warfare. The focus is placed on quick military manoeuvres into the territory of the adversary, the blockading of civilian, military and political structures into a non-effective and non-resistant state, and the imposition of a favourable political resolution before resistance and support can be garnered for the cause of the adversary from both within and without. The third is the utilisation of military resources in military assistance missions beyond the immediate close orbit of Russia. Such missions include the provision of military equipment, military advisers, or limited combat units.

The **subject of analysis** of the paper derives from the above deconstruction of the object of analysis and the three main vectors of the implementation of military force in Russian military art and focuses on one specific category of the *"military operation"*.

The Phase I Russian operations in Ukraine mirrored historical Soviet approaches; however, where Soviet operations achieved success, Russian operations in Ukraine in February-March 2022 fell short of the assigned goals and objectives.

The **principal thesis** of the paper is subdivided into two core postulations:

In the history of the Soviet Union and later the Russian Federation (Russia), the military operational art has been refined and centred on the *"military operation"* as the principal and most effective method and choice of employment of the armed and special forces against perceived threats for the achievement of set political goals.

The Phase I Russian operations in Ukraine mirrored historical Soviet approaches; however, where Soviet operations achieved success, Russian operations in Ukraine in February-March 2022 fell short of the assigned goals and objectives.

The following paper seeks to provide proof for the above thesis by conducting a comparative analysis, where two historical case studies of the *"military operation"* will initially be examined – Czechoslovakia (1968) and Afghanistan (1979). The case studies encompass military operations carried out by the Soviet Union, which exemplify a specific and unique approach in attempting to achieve political objectives through the employment of military means without engaging in direct *"doctrinal"* warfare. To define and better understand the character and role of the *"military operation"*, in each case study, the following will be established as a baseline for analysis and further comparison: *political goals*, *military objectives*, *preparation*, and *execution*. These four elements form the matrix of the *"military operation"*, the principal main goal of the state to achieve its security needs *(figure 1)*.
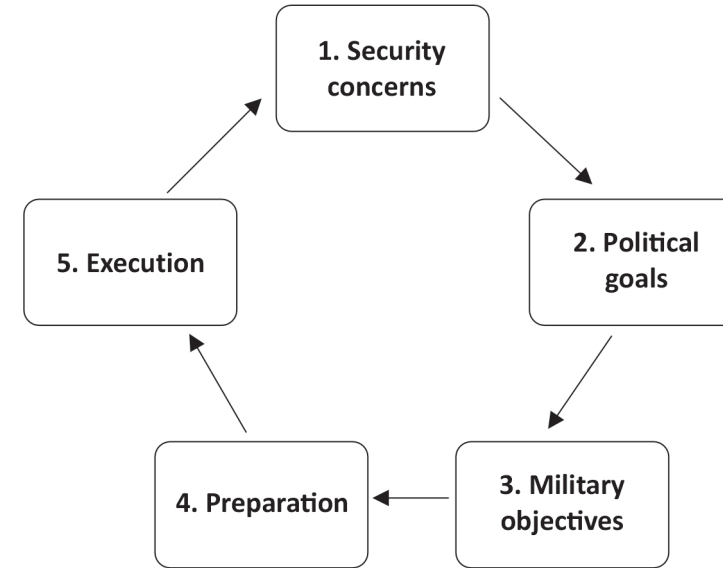
Figure 1: Matrix of the *"military operation"*

1. The security concerns of the state drive political leadership elites to make decisions on how to alleviate them in favourable political outcomes. **2.** In turn, manifested **political goals** have the choice of instrumentarium where hard power in the form of the implementation of military force is made preferable. **3.** The application of military force is defined by set **military objectives** by the wanted political outcomes. **4.** To achieve both the set military objectives and the political goals behind them, adequate **preparations** are made to afford the necessary concentration of resources, military or otherwise, to conduct shaping activities to degrade the ability of the adversary to respond and in a manner where their accumulation would not give rise to a pre-emptive response. **5.** Accumulated power, by the military objectives is then unleashed in the **execution** phase. The execution strives towards achieving set objectives and goals, delivering a favourable political outcome and remedying security concerns.

The security concerns of the state drive political leadership elites to make decisions on how to alleviate them in favourable political outcomes.

The application of military force is defined by set military objectives by the wanted political outcomes.

Based on the four specific layers of the given military operations, the paper will subsequently apply their structure to understanding the objectives, conduct and outcomes of the First Phase (Phase I) of hostilities in Ukraine in 2022, spanning the period from 24 February to late March. Ultimately the paper in its conclusion would provide a combined comparative table of analysis, which will on the one hand

present the similarities in characteristics of the three military operations, and on the other hand, how, despite following a near identical model to the historical examples, the Russian operation in Ukraine suffered significantly from qualitative and quantitative factors in its beginning stage.

The paper aims to both expand the understanding of military operational art in historical terms and to provide, based on the historical interpretations, an adequate and valuable information tool for understanding and further analysing the contemporary security environment, specifically on the European continent, the conflict in Ukraine and the Russian approaches towards the utilisation of military force.

In the examination of the case studies, a diverse set of resources are utilised to achieve maximum objectivity in the analysis. For the historical examples of Hungary, Czechoslovakia and Afghanistan, ample academic research, declassified material and expert analyses have emerged over the years, which can be directly applied to defining the four stages of each military operation. The resources used aim to encompass the widest possible range by including multilingual materials from the states in question, and outside analysis both from Western and Eastern sources. For the example of Ukraine and Phase I of the Russian operation, and in due consideration of the still ongoing conflict as of early 2023, the fog of war, the differing political perspectives on events and the role of propaganda in an ongoing conflict, the resource set includes the utilisation of more recent and mature research material, official statements, expert analysis, as well as personally collected open-source data and observations during the opening months of the conflict. The evolution of the concept of military operations of this character can be further expanded and reinforced to include other military engagements of the Soviet Union and later Russia, including the suppression of the uprisings in East Germany in 1953, Chechnya in 1994/1995, Georgia in 2008 and the Crimea in 2014, but these fall outside of the scope and limitations of the following paper.

MILITARY OPERATIONS OF THE SOVIET UNION

In the period between 1945 and 1991, the Soviet Union engaged in a multitude of military operations spanning from small- to large-scale military assistance missions in proxy conflicts with the United States in the far abroad and large-scale military interventions utilising conventional forces in the near abroad and the perceived immediate sphere of Soviet influence. The second class of military activities includes operations to stabilise allied socialist governments and suppress popular dissent in the European theatre, as well as to expand Soviet influence in regions of particular geographic significance. Examples of such operations include the suppression of the East German Uprisings in 1953, the suppression of the Hungarian Revolution of 1956, the intervention in Czechoslovakia in 1968, and the Soviet entry and subsequent war in Afghanistan from 1979 to 1989, amongst others. In the following section, the paper will examine the latter two operations, centred on defining and analysing the four predefined key components, which make up the matrix of any given military operation – *political goals, military objectives, preparation and execution*. The choice of case studies is based on several factors, which most closely correlate with the objectives of the paper and the goal of interpreting historical and contemporary Russian approaches towards the implementation of military force in the doctrinally defined *"military operation"* and the context of early-stage operations in Ukraine in 2022. The factors include the quantitative and qualitative characteristics of the two operations, which differ from other possible examples, as they represent the large-scale and complex commitment of conventional and special forces; the similarities in end goal political and military objectives; and the degree to which both operations serve to showcase a refinement of military operational art, after other engagements where Soviet forces had participated. The two case studies, in their outcome, also most clearly contrast the results of Russian operations in Ukraine in February-March 2022.

Czechoslovakia. 1968. Operation "Danube"

The Warsaw Pact Intervention in Czechoslovakia in 1968 was consequent to other operations carried out by the Soviet armed forces in the Soviet sphere of influence in Europe. In the post-World War II delineation of the European continent, East Germany, Hungary

and Poland had suffered episodes of significant unrest against nascent socialist governments, which in the formative years of the establishment of the Cold War system of power balance, were deemed by Soviet leadership to require the introduction of Soviet military forces to ensure the position of the Soviet Union vis-à-vis the United States and the Western allies. The utilisation of military forces in the suppression of popular unrest within ostensibly independent allied socialist states presented radically different challenges and approaches for the Soviet military compared to both the doctrinal stance of Soviet forces in Europe arrayed against NATO and historical World War II operations and operations in the interwar period. The suppression of the Hungarian Revolution in 1956 exemplified the difficulties of conducting such types of military operations based on limited contingents of available forces engaging in low-intensity asymmetric suppression and stabilisation activities. Such military operations, even though unpopular both among Eastern Bloc states and the wider international community, in all cases accomplished the objectives of preserving the Soviet sphere and curbing popular demands and anti-Soviet sentiments to manageable non-threatening levels. Moreover, they provided the Soviet armed forces with the ability to refine their methodology within a distinctly unique set of operational military tasks, based on similar, if not nearly identical political goals. In 1968, the political landscape and developing situation in Czechoslovakia would again be deemed by Soviet leadership to require the introduction of military forces into the country, building upon experience earned in preceding interventions.

The **political goals of the Soviet leadership in Czechoslovakia** coalesced around similar concerns and end goals to the ones during the East German Uprisings of 1953 and the Hungarian Revolution of 1956 but also bore the lessons learned during their eventual suppression. In principal terms by 1967, the Soviet Union was witnessing a significant loss of credibility of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, political infighting, and widespread public demands for liberalisation. The removal of First Secretary Antonín Novotný, and replacement with Alexander Dubček in late 1967, failed to curb the aforementioned processes, having the opposite effect of increasing public pressure on the new Czechoslovak leadership around Dubček to continue liberal

reforms, resulting in the *"Prague Spring"* of 1968. Such a turn of events, beyond the reforms agreed upon with the replacement of Novotný, was viewed by the Soviets with contempt and as a dangerous signal and a serious threat to the stability of other Eastern Bloc governments and the wider security architecture of the Warsaw Pact. As a result, the Soviet leadership around Brezhnev set down the goal to reverse the processes of liberalisation in Czechoslovakia beyond the means of bilateral negotiations, which were taking place by the summer of 1968, and to bring to power more conservative communist party elites within the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic, headed by Gustáv Husák. However, in consideration of the negative political fallout of the intervention in Hungary, the intervention in Czechoslovakia would encompass the wider Warsaw Pact. Similarly, the intervention would have to overcome the problems faced in Hungary from the resistance of the population and national military units. Political and popular resistance would have to be negated to the maximum possible extent to avoid protracted military engagement against a *"friendly"* socialist country and a broader international outcry. The operation would thus have to be sudden and quick in achieving its goals to prevent the mobilisation of political and military support both from within Czechoslovakia and from other outside powers, especially NATO. A successful operation was viewed as serving a consolidating function for both the Eastern Bloc political regimes and the Warsaw Pact militaries. By April 1968, instead of the situation in Czechoslovakia, the *"Prague Spring"*, the Soviet leadership finalised its decision that a military intervention would have to take place.

The **military objectives of the Warsaw Pact** armed forces, and principally those of the Soviet Union, followed closely the assigned political goals, with military planning, encompassing the conduct of both regular and special security forces, correspondingly revolved around providing a quick political victory through military means. In the lead-up to the military operation, the principal objective was the assembly of a large military grouping of conventional forces within and near Czechoslovakia, whilst masking its intended purpose. The primary objective of forces in the operation would be the rapid seizure of the capital of Prague and the city of Brno by rapidly advancing ground

The utilisation of military forces in the suppression of popular unrest within ostensibly independent allied socialist states presented radically different challenges and approaches for the Soviet military compared to both the doctrinal stance of Soviet forces in Europe arrayed against NATO and historical World War II operations and operations in the interwar period.

The military objectives of the Warsaw Pact armed forces, and principally those of the Soviet Union, followed closely the assigned political goals, with military planning, encompassing the conduct of both regular and special security forces, correspondingly revolved around providing a quick political victory through military means. In the lead-up to the military operation, the principal objective was the assembly of a large military grouping of conventional forces within and near Czechoslovakia, whilst masking its intended purpose.

and airborne forces. Prague represented the main target, where the centres of gravity for potential resistance to the military operation were concentrated, the political leadership under Dubček, the military command apparatus and the strongest concentration of anti-Soviet sentiment among the population. Military forces would have the additional task of seizing key locations around the country, with a focus placed on airports around Prague and Brno, allowing for the direct landing of forces in the opening of the operation. Soviet forces would also blockade major urban centres and immobilise the country, seizing city entrances, major road intersections, bridges, and train stations and moving in to capture locations of importance such as radio and television centres, places of gathering, as well as military command posts and blockade military units, relying on the fast movement of forces and the shock value of the tank and mechanised formations. In terms of the conduct towards the Czechoslovak People's Army (ČSLA), in the cases where hostility was assumed, the objectives were to *"localise"* the Czechoslovak forces, and if not possible, to *"disarm"* them (Вартанов, 2004, pp. 58-62). Popular resistance in urban terrain was seen as the most probable hindrance to the quick completion of the operation and special focus was placed on suppressing civil unrest. Additionally, measures were to be taken to minimise the possibility of NATO entrance, with the blocking of the West German border early in the invasion, and in the case where NATO forces were present, to refrain from any aggressive actions. The operation called for the entrance of 20 divisions in the first three days, with an additional 10 divisions following suit in the subsequent further two days. In the case where the military operation was unsuccessful in providing a quick outcome and led to a deteriorating situation on the European continent, an additional 85-100 Soviet divisions and 70-80 Polish, East German, Hungarian and Bulgarian divisions were envisioned to take part in immediate future hostilities. The Soviet strategic deterrent forces would also be placed on higher alert status, as an additional signal towards outside intervention (Ibid).

The **period of preparation was key to the outcome of the military operation in Czechoslovakia**. The preparation stage included large-scale political, military and intelligence efforts on the part of the Soviet Union to ensure a positive outcome of the operation. Initial planning

Prague represented the main target, where the centres of gravity for potential resistance to the military operation were concentrated, the political leadership under Dubček, the military command apparatus and the strongest concentration of anti-Soviet sentiment among the population.

and organisation for a military operation commenced in the period February-April 1968, before the final decision of Soviet leadership (Burgess III & Merritt, 1990, pp. 183-185; Вартанов, 2004, pp. 58-62). The mobilisation of conventional forces of the Warsaw Pact was masked behind the organisation of military exercises both within Czechoslovakia and around it. Starting in May 1968, the large military exercise *"Shumava"* was conducted, with 16 thousand Soviet troops being placed within Czechoslovakia itself (Вартанов, 2004, pp. 58-62; Povolný, 2008, pp. 21-28, 31-35). Soviet and Warsaw Pact commands extensively worked on resolving the questions by the set military objectives, focusing on coordination between national militaries, urban warfare, blocking operations, and suppression of civil unrest (Баев, 2008, p. 200). When the exercise ended on 3 July, Soviet withdrawal was purposefully slow. In the period 23 July – 10 August, the rear-area exercise *"Neman"* was conducted. On 11 August, air-defence exercises *"Sky Shield"* were commenced (Вартанов, 2004, pp. 58-62). Thus, by the eventual date of the final decision for military operation on 16 August, Warsaw Pact forces had prepared extensively on all levels for supporting and conducting a large-scale military operation. Overall, accumulated Warsaw Pact forces included 250 thousand troops in the first echelon and 250 thousand more in the second echelon, against the roughly 200-250 thousand non-mobilised troops of the Czechoslovak People's Army (a 2:1 advantage). After the conclusion of the series of exercises, Warsaw Pact troops would move into positions for the intervention in late July 1968. In the preparation phase, air force and VDV officers were embedded in both Prague and Brno to gather intelligence in preparation for the air-landing operations on Czechoslovak airfields, whilst embedded Soviet officers within the Czechoslovak People's Army would assess and monitor the developing situation and hinder the logistics and organisational situation of the ČSLA. Simultaneously, separate military exercises of the ČSLA were organised in Western Bohemia, to divert forces away from the principal points of crossing of Warsaw Pact forces (Burgess III & Merritt, 1990, pp. 184-185). In the months leading up to the military operation, key elements in the newly appointed political and military leadership in Czechoslovakia, represented by President Ludvík Svoboda and Defence Minister Martin Dzúr, respectively, were dissuaded from interfering in the eventual deployment of Warsaw Pact forces to the country

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and would serve to constitute along with others a new government after the removal of Dubček.

After two attempts to introduce forces into Czechoslovakia in May and August 1968, through the large-scale military exercise *"Shumava"* (Povolný, 2008, pp. 28-55), the **execution of the full-scale Warsaw Pact military intervention into Czechoslovakia**, codenamed Operation *"Danube"*, commenced at 22:15 on 20 August 1968 with the signal *"Valtava-666"*. Warsaw Pact ground forces entered the country simultaneously from East Germany, Poland, the Soviet Union and Hungary in four main directions along twenty points of crossing (Вартанов, 2004). The main forces headed to the main cities of Prague, Plzen, Brno and Bratislava. Ground forces also rapidly moved along the West German and Austrian borders to secure them (Povolný, 2008, pp. 150-160). Even before the ground elements were activated, the Soviet VDV and special operations units were already undertaking tasks on the territory of Czechoslovakia by the set military objectives in seven air-landing operations. The most vital, at Ruzyne Airport in Prague, began at 20:30, with the landing of two unplanned Aeroflot-painted An-24 aircraft, which with the assistance of personnel from the Czechoslovak Interior Ministry, unloaded personnel that will form the bridgehead for the decapitation strike on Czechoslovak leadership. In the following hours between 23:00 and 04:00 on 21 August, Ruzyne Airport was fully secured and utilised for the mass landing of VDV and Spetsnaz forces by aircraft, with their subsequent employment in the rapid seizure of key government buildings and the arrest of the Czechoslovak political leadership in Prague (Burgess III & Merritt, 1990, pp. 185-187; Zaloga, 1985, pp. 12-13; Suvorov, 1988, p. 150). In the early morning of 21 August, about 5 hours after crossing the border, forward elements of the 20th Guards Army reached Prague and supported the forces of the Soviet 7th VDV Division and Bulgarian 22nd Motor Rifles in securing the city (Вартанов, 2004, p. 60). The military operation concluded 36 hours after its beginning, facing no resistance from the nearly 200,000 strong ČSLA. The largest resistance occurred in Prague, where civilians erected numerous barricades and protested *en masse* the arrival of Soviet forces in the city, leading to civilian casualties when the protests were suppressed with the use of tank forces to crush through the erected barriers (Баев, 2008, pp. 202-203). Warsaw Pact forces also suffered casualties

After two attempts to introduce forces into Czechoslovakia in May and August 1968, through the large-scale military exercise "Shumava", the execution of the full-scale Warsaw Pact military intervention into Czechoslovakia, codenamed Operation "Danube", commenced at 22:15 on 20 August 1968 with the signal "Valtava-666".

from instances of friendly fire, especially in the seizure of Prague when ground forces met up with the already present VDV forces, with some not having placed identification markings on their vehicles.

Figure 2: Operation "Danube".
Source: original author unknown, map (in Russian) available at: iohotnik.ru

Overall, the military operation achieved all of its objectives, successfully demonstrating an intrinsically well-planned approach towards the execution of a large-scale military operation, combining numerous moving parts. In advance, the preparation phase accomplished the tasks of masking the concentration and purpose of Warsaw Pact forces, and when the intent was known to Czechoslovak military leadership, adequate measures prevented the mobilisation and action of the ČSLA. Specialist assets in the country further expedited the effective completion of assigned objectives once the operation had started, effectively suppressing both the Czechoslovak military and civilian leadership. However, in political terms, the outcome of the operation was viewed as unfavourable by the leadership of the Warsaw Pact countries in political, economic and diplomatic terms. The military operation was viewed as a harsh repression of the political and civilian demands in Czechoslovakia for liberalisation and democratisation.

Interpreting the Russian Way of War.
– Comparative Analysis of Soviet Military Operations with Phase I Russian Operations in Ukraine –

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A large-scale immigration wave of the Czechoslovak population was triggered towards Western Europe despite the measures undertaken to block off the Western border. The operation was further widely condemned on the international scene and in UN assemblies. An unwanted additional wedge was also placed in the security structure of the Eastern Bloc and especially when concerning the reaction of Romania and Yugoslavia, where relations had already been strained after the military intervention in Hungary, a decade prior.

The successful intervention in Czechoslovakia served to further reinforce the belief of Soviet leadership in the methods and capabilities of the Armed Forces and Special Services.

Afghanistan. 1979. Operation "Baikal-79"

The location and role of Afghanistan are critical for the security architecture of the Central Asian region and had been recognised as such dating back to the 19th century with the "Great Game" between the British and Russian Empires.

Outside of the European theatre, the vast borders of the Soviet Union presented other adjacent regions as areas of particular interest and security considerations for the Soviet leadership. The location and role of Afghanistan are critical for the security architecture of Central Asian region and had been recognised as such dating back to the 19th century with the *"Great Game"* between the British and Russian Empires. In the 20th century, and specifically the Cold War-era context, Afghanistan again assumed a role of pivotal importance for the two global superpowers in extending influence in Asia and especially for the Soviet Union, where the historically unstable constituent Central Asian SSRs bordered the country. In 1973, a coup d'état overthrew the Afghan monarchy of the Barakzai dynasty, replacing it with a republican government, which formulated good relations with the Soviet Union under President Mohammed Daud. This government was itself overthrown in 1978 by communist-leaning forces, leading to even closer cooperation with the Soviet Union under Nur Muhammad Taraki and Hafizullah Amin (Арунова, 1981, стр. 48-56), which saw the entrance of Soviet military advisors and substantial military-technical support into Afghanistan. Such an outcome was very positive for the Soviet Union, especially in consideration of adversaries in the region such as Iran, Pakistan and China. However, by the summer of 1979, the situation quickly became contentious to Soviet interests with political infighting, popular resistance to the government and finally with Amin and the Khalqist faction undertaking a purge against Taraki's Parchamite faction (Антонов, 2018), leading the Kremlin

to seek a solution, which would entrench Soviet power in Afghanistan and bring more direct control over a crucial new linchpin in the Soviet sphere. Thus, **the Kremlin set out the political goals of the removal of Hafizullah Amin** and his supporters, the replacement of Amin with the Parchamite, Babrak Karmal, who was exiled to the Eastern Bloc, and the stabilisation of the country's rising insurrection against the central government (Galeotti, 2021, pp. 21-22). The political decision for a military operation was made on 10 December 1979 (Никитенко, 2004, стр. 60-61), and would be codenamed *"Baikal-79"*, an inconspicuous name, closer to the one given to the annual regional military exercises.

The **military objectives of the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan** were centred on the physical removal of Hafizullah Amin and the introduction into Afghanistan of a large Soviet military contingent from the Turkestan Military District, which would secure the coming into power of Babrak Karmal. For this purpose, a sufficient build-up of forces had to be conducted. The operation would have to be supported by military and special forces contingents already on the territory of Afghanistan. The Afghan military's capabilities would have to be degraded to the extent, that they would not be able to resist the Soviet incursion and would have to switch loyalties to the new regime. Afterwards, Soviet forces would have to assume the duties of suppressing the diverse opposition groups forming across the country. As with the previous instance of Czechoslovakia, the role of the Soviet armed forces would be to blockade and suppress the Afghan military through non-kinetic means, quickly advancing and securing Kabul, as well as other major urban centres and key infrastructure sites, such as airports, to allow for the quick insertion of additional forces via air-landing operations. In the planning stage, the provision was made for the need to physically remove Amin and his close circle. When an initial poisoning attempt failed, the move of Amin to the heavily fortified Tajbeg Palace on the outskirts of Kabul in late December 1979 necessitated the rethinking of the assassination of Amin from a purely covert operation to an aggressive one, which would directly engage with the large number of Afghan forces surrounding the Palace.

The **preparation phase for the operation was short, but intricate**, relying on available resources on the territory of Afghanistan and newly

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assembled ones on the other side of the border. In seeking support from the Soviet Union, Amin had allowed the entrance of Soviet advisors and military specialists, providing them unfettered access to much of the political and military structures of Afghanistan (Burgess III & Merritt, 1990, pp. 203-204). The limited military contingent in Afghanistan included VDV forces and limited detachments from the KGB and GRU, including the three-thousand-strong *"Muslim Battalion"* (Антонов, 2018). The forces initially introduced into Afghanistan during the military operation would rely on formations from the Turkestan Military District. On 16 December 1979, the 40th Combined Arms Army was formed in District, under the command of Lieutenant General Yu. Tukharinov (Волков, 2011). The force composition was debated, based on the priorities put forward by the two involved branches and their corresponding objectives – the military favoured a larger military contingent of over 100 thousand, based on the experience in Czechoslovakia and the need to take and control the large territory of Afghanistan; the intelligence services favoured a contingent of 30-40 thousand needed to secure the removal of Amin (Galeotti, 2021, pp. 21-23). By 25 December 1979, a compromise decision had put the final force composition at 75-80 thousand, which included about 100 total formations (Никитенко, 2004, p. 61), formed in 8 motor rifle divisions, 2 VDV divisions, 2 tank divisions, 2 aviation, 2 VDV division, 2 separate VDV brigades, and supporting logistics brigades, as well as 3 reserve motor rifle divisions, outside of the main force (Котев, 2001, стр. 114-119; Волков, 2011). The Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan (DRA) was nominally large with a paper strength of nearly 150 thousand, consisting of 11 infantry, 3 tank and 2 motor rifle divisions (Котев, 2001, pp. 114-119), but was practically insignificant, close to 45 thousand (Galeotti, 2021, pp. 26-27), with most forces heavily understrength and divided between political, ideological and tribal loyalties. Their capabilities would be further hampered in advance of the beginning of the military operation by the already present Soviet forces, who would conduct sabotage, misinformation and diversionary actions.

The **execution of *"Baikal-79"* was a two-part operation**, encompassing the larger military operation and entry of Soviet forces into Afghanistan, and the operation to eliminate Amin and seize Kabul, special forces operation *"Storm-333"*. On 25 December 1979, at 15:00, units of the Soviet 40th Army crossed the state border of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan, beginning Operation *"Baikal-79"*. Additionally, three thousand VDV and special operations forces of the KGB and GRU would land at Kabul airport (Антонов, 2018). This initial entry of Soviet forces would be seen by Amin as a positive answer by Soviet authorities to his repeated requests for military assistance in securing the deteriorating situation of his government. Soviet ground forces quickly moved along the key road arteries along two main axis – starting on 28 December 1979 from the Turkmenistan SSR south towards Herat and Farah, pivoting east towards Kandahar; starting on 25 December 1979 from the Uzbekistan SSR south towards Mazar-I Sharif, Kunduz, Kabul, and converging with the other pincer on Kandahar (Galeotti, 2021, p. 25; Burgess III & Merritt, 1990, p. 194). The special forces operation *"Storm-333"* began on 27 December 1979 at 19:30 (Антонов, 2018), with the assault on Tajbeg Palace. Simultaneously, key centres of power were assaulted in Kabul (Galeotti, 2021, p. 54), resulting in sporadic small-scale gunfights between Soviet forces and Amin supporters throughout the city. Ultimately the assault of the VDV and special forces successfully decapitated the Afghan military and its ability to coordinate. The special operations group of the *"Muslim Battalion"*, VDV detachments, GRU and KGB operatives engaged in a brutal assault on the heavily fortified palace and surrounding DRA positions. Storming the palace, the grouping successfully neutralised Amin (Козлов & et al, 2013, pp. 34-40). By 24:00 on 27 December 1979, the firefights in Kabul had subsided. By the morning of 28 December 1979, motor rifle forces from the ground element had linked up with VDV forces to the northeast of Kabul. Utilising the airfields in Kabul and Bagram, a total of 343 transport aircraft would land and unload additional personnel and equipment (Никитенко, 2004, p. 66). Operation *"Baikal-79"* was completed successfully, two days after the initial entry into Afghanistan, and three hours after commencing open actions. On 28 December at 02:00, Babrak Karmal, who had been flown into the country beforehand with the Soviet VDV contingent, appealed to the people of Afghanistan, assuming power and presenting the role of Soviet forces in the country (Антонов, 2018).

By 25 December 1979, a compromise decision had put the final force composition at 75-80 thousand, which included about 100 total formations, consisting of 8 motor rifle divisions, 2 VDV divisions, 2 tank divisions, 2 aviation, 2 VDV division, 2 separate VDV brigades, and supporting logistics brigades, as well as 3 reserve motor rifle divisions, outside of the main force.

The special forces operation "Storm-333" began on 27 December 1979 at 19:30, with the assault on Tajbeg Palace. Simultaneously, key centres of power were assaulted in Kabul, resulting in sporadic small-scale gunfights between Soviet forces and Amin supporters throughout the city.

Figure 3: Operation "Baikal-79".
Source: Rodina, 1999.

Operation "Baikal-79" followed along nearly identical lines of planning, preparation and implementation to the previously discussed "Operation Danube", and in turn delivered the required results– the intentions of Soviet leadership, the military build-up and the purpose of forces were successfully masked; Afghan leadership was removed in a hard, but successful decapitation strike through the employment of special forces, with the capabilities of the DRA army successfully suppressed in the preparation and opening execution phases.

The success of the first phase of the Soviet entry into Afghanistan in 1979 from a military standpoint alone cannot be understated. Operation *"Baikal-79"* followed along nearly identical lines of planning, preparation and implementation to the previously discussed *"Operation Danube"*, and in turn delivered the required results – the intentions of Soviet leadership, the military build-up and the purpose of forces were successfully masked; Afghan leadership was removed in a hard, but successful decapitation strike through the employment of special forces, with the capabilities of the DRA army successfully suppressed in the preparation and opening execution phases; Soviet forces quickly entered and occupied all assigned objectives in the allotted limited period, meeting only token resistance, for which the assembled forces were sufficient to overcome.

However, the end-term political goals, which gave rise to the decision to begin a *"military operation"*, namely, to install a stable Soviet-aligned government in power was proving a tenuous final objective, as organised opposition quickly mounted in the countryside, with the dilapidated Afghan military doubtful to be able to maintain

control. Ultimately the entry of Soviet forces into Afghanistan would be a disaster, facing a decade of costly counterinsurgency operations against the Mujahedeen, which would bring about mounting social and economic pressures within the Soviet Union, leading up to its collapse. The invasion would be condemned by other international actors, leading to the end of the period of détente with the West and increased Soviet isolation.

Two years after the exit of Soviet forces from the decade-long conflict in Afghanistan, the Soviet Union would collapse in 1991. Operation *"Baikal-79"* was the last major "military operation" of the specific type discussed in the paper to be conducted by the Soviet military. The conclusion can be made that operations *"Baikal-79"* and the preceding *"Operation Danube"*, as well as the operations in Hungary *"Volna"* and *"Vikhr"* precipitated the evolution and reinforcement of a specific and unique approach in Soviet military thinking for the large scale employment of military forces outside of conventional kinetic warfare in a complex specialised *"military operation"* type, which would leverage the overwhelming shock value from the rapid deployment of standing operational-strategic military groupings, with the abilities of the airborne forces and special forces to deliver results in the immediate sphere of perceived Soviet influence, and against less capable opponents. Both Soviet operations discussed in this paper and based upon the outlined four principal components of analysis and comparison demonstrate that the military planning, preparation and executions phases yielded favourable results; however, the set political goals, whilst achieving their set parameters, discounted larger and longer terms effects outside of the scope and timeframe of the military operation itself.

The operations in Hungary "Volna" and "Vikhr" precipitated the evolution and reinforcement of a specific and unique approach in Soviet military thinking for the large scale employment of military forces outside of conventional kinetic warfare in a complex specialised "military operation" type.

MILITARY OPERATIONS OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION

The Russian Federation inherited much of the approaches and solutions developed during the Soviet era, albeit with severely limited quantitative and qualitative capacities to implement them. Regardless, the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation resorted to the application of military force both within and beyond its borders on several occasions with contrasting results. The operations in Chechnya in 1994-1996 and 1999-2000, especially in the first case demonstrated limited ability to repeat Soviet successes in the defined *"military operation"* type.

Russian operations into the 21st century, in Georgia in 2008 and Ukraine in 2014, showcased the build-up of Russian military capabilities and the further implementation of the *"military operation"* within the historical parameters already showcased, especially with the latter example, where Russian military and special forces succeeded in capturing the Crimean Peninsula in a rapid low-intensity and non-kinetic operation. At the beginning of 2022, the Russian Federation would again attempt to enforce political outcomes through the implementation of military force with the entry of its forces into Ukraine. The beginning phase of this conflict spanning the period from 24 February to mid-late March will be discussed in the following paragraph demonstrating an adherence to the already outlined approaches developed and executed during the Soviet era, whilst also establishing a chronology of events and an overall operational picture.

The main thrust of Russian forces was directed towards Kyiv, facilitating the most predominant argument, that the removal of the government and the central role of the capital, Kyiv, as a centre of political and military power was a key political and military objective of Russia.

Ukraine. 2022

The interpretation of the political and military objectives of Russia in Ukraine is an ambitious and ambiguous goal, considering the recent nature of events. However, based on a combination of official statements, expert analysis, and most importantly, the following conduct of hostilities, general conclusions can be extrapolated. The **stated political goal of the Russian leadership** was the "de-militarisation" and "de-Nazification" of the Ukrainian state. Based on subsequent official positions put forward by Russia, the end-term political goals for the resolution of the conflict also include the distancing of Ukraine and the end of its ambitions to become part of the European Union or the security architecture of the NATO Alliance. Neither of these stated ambitions of Russia could be fulfilled without the **removal of the government of Ukraine, its centres of power and its ability to defend the country**. As would be later summarised, the main thrust of Russian forces was directed towards Kyiv, facilitating the most predominant argument, that the removal of the government and the central role of the capital, Kyiv, as a centre of political and military power was a key political and military objective of Russia. In addition, a key element in the planning was the supposed popular support the operation would garner within Ukraine itself, which would be further facilitated by the quick collapse of the Ukrainian government. In the end term, the operation, similarly to past instances, as already examined,

was envisioned as a quick military operation, which would force the collapse of the Ukrainian government and its replacement and would later move on to suppress any civil or limited military resistance that may arise.

In terms of **military objectives**, the first directive was to assemble the necessary grouping forces but to keep the size, composition, direction and purpose of their attack a secret. Once Russian forces entered Ukraine, they would have to act quickly to render the response of the international community irrelevant. Critical centres of political and economic power would have to be taken and secured, whilst also confusing the reaction of the Ukrainian military in responding accordingly along an enormous front. The capture of Kyiv was central, which would be facilitated by both a land offensive from multiple directions and air-landing operations to seize bridgeheads in the Kyiv suburbs and more specifically the Hostomel Airport to the northwest of Kyiv. To support the conduct of the ground forces, strikes would be carried out to degrade Ukraine's ability to interdict Russian operational freedom by destroying its air, maritime and air-defence forces. The role of the Armed Forces of Ukraine would be nullified further by fixing them in the Donbas and blockading any military formations along the principal axis of attack (Zabrodskyi, Watling, Danylyuk, & Reynolds, 2023).

The **preparation phase for the eventual incursion into Ukraine** was an extended one, lasting from early 2021 to mid-February 2022. The initial build-up of forces around Ukraine's borders began with a concentration of military units around the Donbas region for the stated purposes of large-scale military exercises, with the number of forces increasing to 100 thousand by mid-April 2021 (Гончаренко, 2021). At their conclusion in April, the military exercises encompassed 300 thousand combined military personnel of the Western and Southern Military Districts of the Russian Armed Forces and were declared over (Интерфакс, 2021), with units returning to their principal basing locations. Deployments in the winter-spring period were; however, a prelude to a much larger force concentration, beginning in the summer of 2021 for the *"Zapad-2021"* military exercise. The *"Zapad-2021"* exercise, which lasted from 10-16 September 2021, and involved between 150 thousand and 200 thousand military personnel, on the territory of both Russia and Belarus, was the largest

The "Zapad-2021" exercise, which lasted from 10-16 September 2021, and involved between 150 thousand and 200 thousand military personnel, on the territory of both Russia and Belarus, was the largest military exercise in Europe since the Cold War era.

military exercise in Europe since the Cold War era (Congressional Research Service, 2021, p. 2; The Economist, 2021). Western intelligence agencies, and in particular those of the United States, interpreted the military build-up as a prelude to imminent military action on the part of Moscow against Ukraine (Deni, 2021). The preparation phase extended past the autumn exercises and continued with the *"Union Resolve 2022"* exercise between Belarus and Russia on 10 February 2022. The military manoeuvres brought additional forces from Russia's Eastern Military District into Belarus, as well as the movement of Russian combat aviation to Belarussian airfields (Interfax, 2022). On 21 February 2022, the Russian legislature recognised the independence of the Lugansk and Donetsk Republics and promptly moved to approve the possible deployment of the Russian Armed Forces abroad (BBC, 2022). The entry of Russian forces into the Donbas region began on the same day (Child, 2022). Overall, the Russian forces deployed on the eve of the operation are considered to have been around 150 thousand, supplemented by 40 thousand Lugansk and Donetsk irregulars, as well as forces subordinated to the Russian Interior Ministry and National Guard (Jones, 2022, p. 2; Zabrodskyi, Watling, Danylyuk, & Reynolds, 2023, pp. 7-13). Arrayed against them, the combined forces of the Armed Forces of Ukraine (Збройні сили України/ ZSU), numbered 196 thousand, with an additional 102 thousand gendarmerie and paramilitary personnel (The International Institute for Strategic Studies, 2022, pp. 221-222).

The **execution of the Russian military operation in Ukraine** began early on 24 February 2022 and followed along similar lines to the already presented cases, but with the key difference that military force was directly applied to degrade the combat capabilities of the Armed Forces of Ukraine in the opening phase of the conflict, yet not to the extent where Russian *"doctrinal"* warfare would apply. Russian missile strikes from airborne, naval, and land-based platforms attempted to strike Ukrainian aviation assets on military airfields, as well as to suppress Ukrainian air-defence capabilities, alongside attacks on other military installations. At the same time, Russian electronic warfare attempted to extensively degrade the capabilities of the Ukrainian air defence and command and control networks (Zabrodskyi, Watling, Danylyuk, & Reynolds, 2023, p. 24). At dawn on the morning of 24 February, Russian VDV forces conducted an air-landing operation on the Antonov Airport at Hostomel, in the north-western suburbs of Kyiv, seizing the airport.

Russian missile strikes from airborne, naval, and land-based platforms attempted to strike Ukrainian aviation assets on military airfields, as well as to suppress Ukrainian air-defence capabilities, alongside attacks on other military installations. At the same time, Russian electronic warfare attempted to extensively degrade the capabilities of the Ukrainian air defence and command and control networks.

This evidenced that a large part of the Kyiv air defence umbrella had been suppressed, even if not through kinetic means. On the morning of 26 February, Russian forces would also unsuccessfully attempt to seize (or raid) Vasylkiv Air Base, southwest of Kyiv, although the composition and character of Russian forces involved, deep behind Ukrainian lines have not been publicly established. The ground elements of the operation penetrated the Ukrainian border along several axes (Neue Zürcher Zeitung, 2023). The main northern axis *(figure 4)* advanced from Belarus, from the region of the cities of Mazyr and Gomel, along both sides of the Dnieper River, with the apparent aim of reaching Kyiv,
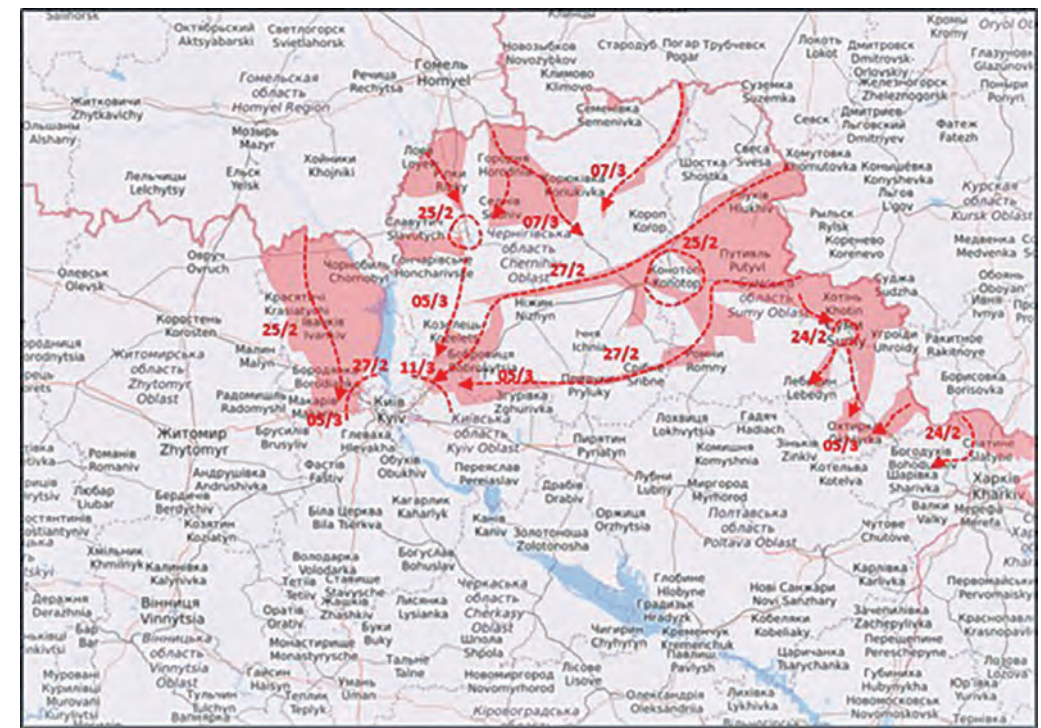
Figure 4: Russian operations in Northern and Eastern Ukraine by 11 March 2022.
Sources: baseline map by Liveuamap; overlay made by the author based on information from liveuamap, Neue Zürcher Zeitung and personally collected open-source information.

linking with the already established bridgeheads at Hostomel Airport and conducting a blockade on the Ukrainian capital both from the east and the west (Zabrodskyi, Watling, Danylyuk, & Reynolds, 2023, pp. 26-27). In the city of Kyiv itself, information and footage had emerged of sporadic firefights at several locations, indicating the presence of either advanced reconnaissance detachments or previously infiltrated

Russian elements of the special forces and security services. The forces moving in from the northeast had the assumed task of blockading the city of Chernihiv/Chernigov, where the 1st Tank Brigade of the ZSU was stationed and continuing to support the blockading of Kyiv from the east. The northern axis was additionally supported by an advance into the Sumy region of Ukraine *(figure 4)*, along the E101 and H07 transport arteries, with the city of Konotop being taken and the city of Sumy being bypassed and blockaded in the early hours of the operation. These armoured trusts advancing along the key routes, were by 12 March on the eastern approaches to Kyiv at Brovary (Zabrodskyi, Watling, Danylyuk, & Reynolds, 2023, pp. 32-38; Neue Zürcher Zeitung, 2023). The eastern axis *(figure 5)* moved to blockade the major city of Kharkiv/Kharkov and to seize territory north of the Seversky Donets River towards the urban centres of Izyum and Severodonetsk, to secure the flanks of both the Kharkiv blockade and the Donbas region. The southern axis *(figure 5)* advanced from the Crimea moving in two principal directions – to the north in the direction of Kherson and the north-east in the direction of the Zaporizhzhia region. By the end of 25 February, these thrusts had reached and crossed the Dnieper River

Figure 5: Russian operations in Southern and Eastern Ukraine by 11 March 2022.
Sources: baseline map by Liveuamap; overlay made by the author based on information from liveuamap, Neue Zürcher Zeitung and personally collected open-source information.

at Kherson and had advanced to the important city of Melitopol. By the end of the month, Kherson, Melitopol and Berdyansk were fully secured with limited resistance, and Russian forces continued to advance further. By 1 March, this axis of advance had reached, partially blockaded and bypassed the city of Mykolaiv/Nikolaev, moving further north towards Nova Odesa by 9 March, and to the east had placed the city of Mariupol under siege, whilst establishing positions to the north in Zaporizhzhia, running from the Dnieper to the Russian lines in the Donbas (Neue Zürcher Zeitung, 2023). At this point in the period, 10 March – 20 March, Russian forces had reached the maximum extent of their advance (Clark & al, 2022).

Phase I Russian Operations in Ukraine.
Reasons for Failure and Comparisons with the Past

In the roughly three weeks of the military operation from 24 February to late March 2022, Russia had committed all assigned forces for the operation (Congressional Research Service, 2022, p. 10), but was unable to achieve its assigned military objectives, and was thus unable to impose the completion of the principal political goal of a quick resolution in Ukraine through the collapse of the Ukrainian state, the removal of its political and military leadership, and the rendering of the armed forces to a non-combat effective state. The northern advance met stiff resistance in the suburbs of Kyiv and was thus unable to encircle the city, nor to seize the vital centres of power within. The captured airfield at Hostomel could not serve the purpose of landing larger contingents of additional troops or supplies, due to its proximity to ongoing fighting. Ukrainian forces in Chernihiv were able to organise and maintain resistance to blockading Russian forces, preventing the establishment of additional lines of supply towards Kyiv. The advance of columns from the direction of Sumy and Konotop was constantly harassed by attacks along the routes of advance and rear areas, leading to the impossibility of consolidating gains for a concentrated final drive towards Kyiv. Thus, the operational situation in the North serving no useful purpose, beyond tying down Ukrainian forces from redeploying to the east and south, necessitated the conservation and withdrawal of Russian forces by the end of March, ending the threat posed on Kyiv and Ukraine's northern border. In the Kharkov direction, Russian forces were unable to fully blockade the city, nor bypass it, due to effective Ukrainian resistance.

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More successful was the advance towards the Seversky Donets River, which managed to consolidate its positions along the northern bank of the river. The Southern axis achieved higher success in capturing Kherson and linking with Russian forces in the Donbas, meeting limited resistance. The further advance towards Mykolaiv and beyond was eventually hampered by increasingly organised Ukrainian resistance and was thus unable to expand the success beyond the Kherson bridgehead.

Overall, the Phase I Operations in Ukraine followed similar political and military objectives to Russian military operations in the past – the preparation phase was extensive and relied on concealing the purpose, time and direction of attack; military forces would enter the country from multiple directions, with a focus on the decision-making centres, whilst blockading major cities and seizing key locations; ground operations would be supported by air-landings, which would secure airfields for the introduction of additional men and materiel; the shock value of armoured and mechanised units would be the principal force of dissuasion against both the civilian population and the willingness of the opposing army to engage in hostilities. The operation, however, concluded with a failure due to a variety of factors, which in the past had worked in favour of the Soviet Union, but were not present in Ukraine, or were extended to the permissible limit for possible success. In keeping with the military objective of masking the intent of the assembled armed forces and preventing the escape of information, limited to no information was provided to lower rank officers and troops regarding the objectives of their mission and the expected resistance. Ultimately this was successful in surprising the Ukrainian side, which failed to mobilise beforehand and failed to anticipate the concentration of forces towards Kyiv (Zabrodskyi, Watling, Danylyuk, & Reynolds, 2023), but significantly hampered the conduct of the military operation when faced with even limited Ukrainian resistance when such did exist. The forces relegated to the operation ensured that Russia would not have a numerical superiority over the combined non-mobilised Ukrainian Army, National Guard and Special Operations Forces, which would only further increase in favour of the Ukrainian side as mobilisation of forces was conducted. Unlike in previous instances of successful military operations, there were no effective Ukrainian political or military elites that would support the Russian objectives and would act to hamper the ability of the Ukrainian army and population to resist. The territory

In keeping with the military objective of masking the intent of the assembled armed forces and preventing the escape of information, limited to no information was provided to lower rank officers and troops regarding the objectives of their mission and the expected resistance. Ultimately this was successful in surprising the Ukrainian side, which failed to mobilise beforehand and failed to anticipate the concentration of forces towards Kyiv.

of Ukraine and the spread of assigned objectives were much larger compared to past operations, facilitating the dispersal of the limited Russian forces. Along the main axes of advance in the north, acute logistics problems materialised due to the lack of suitable road or rail connections (Jones, 2022, p. 2). Russian forces also did not undertake blockading operations of the Ukrainian border, facilitating the eventual influx of military support for Ukraine. Most significantly, Russian forces did not plan effectively for the carrying out of a military operation in the contingency where significant Ukrainian resistance did occur and were unprepared for the tactics and technology employed by the ZSU. Ultimately this final factor spelt the end for the envisioned quick military operation in Ukraine and shifted its focus and character in the subsequent months to large-scale, high-intensity warfare and the more traditional *"firepower-centric"* doctrine of the Russian Armed Forces, albeit constrained by limited manpower and mobilisation capabilities.

CONCLUSION

Based on the provided case studies and their comparison, several conclusions can be extrapolated. In the military history of the Soviet Union and later the Russian Federation, political crises precipitated by a perceived degradation of the security of the state escalate into military conflicts, based upon the decision to impose political objectives through military means. The constituent elements of such military actions display characteristics that differ significantly from other envisioned employments of Soviet/ Russian military power, namely in either full-scale *"doctrinal"* warfare, or military assistance missions in the far abroad. The qualitative indicators in the case studies define military operations as low-intensity conflicts relying on the use of conventional military power to reinforce the ideological system and security framework centred on Russia. The military actions, based on quantitative indicators encompass limited military resources of operational-strategic military groupings and last only a limited amount of time. The conduct of such military operations in all examples provided, revolves around the rapid introduction of conventional military forces into a state, supported by the active work of special forces and supportive indigenous political elites, to deliver a decapitation strike on the political and military apparatus of a target country. The aim is to incur a defeat and impose a favourable political outcome without engaging military forces in large-scale or even limited kinetic hostilities.

In the military history of the Soviet Union and later the Russian Federation, political crises precipitated by a perceived degradation of the security of the state escalate into military conflicts, based upon the decision to impose political objectives through military means. The constituent elements of such military actions display characteristics that differ significantly from other envisioned employments of Soviet/ Russian military power, namely in either full-scale "doctrinal" warfare, or military assistance missions in the far abroad.

As the below table *(table 1)* showcases, the analysed operations adhere to the same model and baseline characteristics established as the matrix of the *"military operation"* type in Russian and general military art.

Table. 1: Comparative table of the predefined matrix of the "military operation" type along the elements of political goals, military objectives, preparation and execution with the analysed three operations in Czechoslovakia, Afghanistan and Ukraine.

	Czechoslovakia, 1968	Afghanistan, 1979	Ukraine, 2022
Political objectives	The removal of the liberal Dubček government; The curbing of liberal and democratic popular sentiments; The consolidation of Eastern Bloc member states and militaries.	The removal of Amin and his close political and military circle; The installation of a Karmal-led government; The curbing of a pro-Western course set by Amin; The securing of the Soviet southern flank;	The collapse of the Kyiv government; The curbing of Ukrainian pro-NATO and pro-EU stance; The securing of Russian-populated regions in the East of the country;
Military objectives	The rapid introduction of a 250,000-strong military contingent into Czechoslovakia; The blockading and seizure of key military, political, and transport centres around Prague and Brno; communication The prevention of organised military of civilian resistance to the operation.	The entry of an 80,000-strong force into Afghanistan; The securing of all key urban centres and the blockading of Afghan military formations; The physical elimination of Amin in an opening special force operation; The capture of Kabul airport	The entry of 150,000 strong into Ukraine; The blockading of the major cities of Kyiv and Kharkov; Seizure of Hostomel airport outside of Kyiv as part of an air landing operation; The collapse of the Ukrainian military through the shock of a multipronged

	Czechoslovakia, 1968	Afghanistan, 1979	Ukraine, 2022
		and major centres of power in the city;	mechanised rapid advance across the country;
Preparation	Military forces assembled under the guise of the "Shumava" and later exercises; Favourable political alternatives found and co-opted for the operation; Special forces and services assets infiltrated to degrade the military and command capabilities of the ČSLA.	Military forces assembled outside of Afghanistan under the guise of "Baikal" military exercises; Favourable political alternatives found and co-opted for the operation; Military and special forces contingents were introduced into the country under the guise of support, advisory and stabilisation missions.	Military forces assembled under the concealment of several military exercises spanning the whole of 2021; Russian forces enter Lugansk and Donetsk regions two days before the full-scale operation;
Execution	Warsaw Pact forces enter the country along five axes and reach the capital Prague in five hours, entering the city and establishing blocking operations elsewhere; Airlanded forces, with the help of infiltrated and co-opted assets support and seize key airports leading to the introduction	Soviet forces enter the country along two main axes and converge on Kabul and Kandahar in two days; Special forces seize Kabul airport and begin an air landing operation; Key centres of power in Kabul are assaulted and captured; Special forces assault and seize	Russian forces advanced along four major axes centred on Kyiv in the north, Kharkov in the east, and a two-pronged advance toward Nikolaev and Mariupol in the south; Airlanding operation seizes the airport of Hostomel outside of Kyiv in the opening hours;

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	Czechoslovakia, 1968	Afghanistan, 1979	Ukraine, 2022
	of forces into key centres of power before the main advance of Warsaw Pact forces; Western borders of Czechoslovakia were blockaded in the beginning phase; ČSLA forces are blockaded and suppressed through non-kinetic means from interfering in the operation.	Tajbeg Palace, eliminating Amin in the process.	Major resistance is faced in all directions except the south; Four days into the operation, Russian Forces have not reached assigned objectives and no political and military collapse has occurred, with both Kyiv and Kharkov remaining unblockaded; Renewed Russian advance reaches maximum extent by March 8-11 along all axes; After failing to achieve objectives, Russian forces begin organised withdrawal around Kyiv, Sumy, Kharkov and Nikolaev.

The examples provided demonstrate a refinement of the conduct and outcomes during the Soviet era, delivering ultimately successful immediate results, whilst failing to anticipate longer-term political ramifications and international reactions.

In historical terms, such operations have been the preference of Soviet and later Russian leadership in achieving specific political objectives when concerning states on their periphery and in what they consider their sphere of influence. The examples provided demonstrate a refinement of the conduct and outcomes during the Soviet era, delivering ultimately successful immediate results, whilst failing to anticipate longer-term political ramifications and international reactions. In the case of Ukraine in 2022, military actions

again revolved around the established model in Czechoslovakia, Afghanistan and elsewhere, but failed to achieve the set goals due to a variety of factors centred on a fatal underestimation of the Ukrainian military and political capabilities and cohesion, Russia's military prowess in conducting such a type of military operation, and the overall applicability of the described type of military operation to the specific case of Ukraine, where major factors that contributed to Soviet successes in the past were either not present in sufficient quantity, or completely absent. Ultimately, the inability to achieve in full the specific and ambitious goals of such military operations, gives way to them devolving from the proverbial term *"special military operation"* into large-scale and prolonged conventionally termed *"wars"*, as has been the case in Ukraine since.

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CLOUD TECHNOLOGIES AND THE NEED FOR HYBRID CLOUD IMPLEMENTATION IN THE MILITARY ENVIRONMENT

Colonel Dan ȚIGĂNUȘ, PhD

Deputy Chief of Communications and Information Technology Directorate

Cloud computing has been widely adopted as the next-generation digitisation model for transforming the organisation into an entity that drives development and innovation. Nowadays, users of computing systems aim to get quick access to the virtual ecosystem and a new experience in cyberspace that seamlessly integrates with the existing services they use today. From the perspective of the military organisation/Military Enterprise, the cloud provides services for users and structures in a scalable, highly reliable and highly available manner, specifically with different security levels associated with the individual profile and functional roles in the organisation. From the end user's perspective, the cloud provides a simple model for accessing information technology/IT services without the need for the human factor to fully understand the transport/ transmission infrastructure and technology used.

This article explores how modern military-classified and unclassified cloud-native infrastructures can be secured and managed in a national, military-private, or mixed hybrid deployment cyber environment, along with various requirements and considerations for adapting cloud-native applications for military systems. In context, the article provides a simple but comprehensive introduction to the cloud native overview and the major technologies that developers use to build such reliable environments in cyberspace that could be the subject of a feasibility study to implement the concept of hybrid cloud in cyberspace with military use. The material is intended for IT experts, DevOps engineers, CIS (Communications and Information Technology) systems and infrastructure architects, cloud enthusiasts, cloud security experts, and any military professional involved in the development, migration, deployment, and management of current services and operations. of a cloud-native system.

Keywords: cloud computing; resilience; military organisation; information technology; cyberspace;

INTRODUCTION

To take full advantage of the speed and agility of cloud services, many existing services and applications have been transformed into cloud-native applications, and new solutions are being developed to be cloud-first. Cloud applications are built right from the start to enable and incorporate subsequent changes at large scale, with minimal effort and in a short time, but also to ensure the availability and resiliency of systems in operation.

By default, infrastructure for cloud-native applications plays a critical role in efficiently meeting the needs of a military organisation and beyond, but this infrastructure must be designed or adaptable to the demands of information transfer over distances required by mobility and sometimes the expeditionary nature of military activities and operations. If the transmission infrastructure (providing transmission services) is not designed to ensure maximum availability and implicitly provide resilience, based on redundancy, with distributed management that applies the correct practices and standards, even the best cloud-native applications will fail in military-use cyberspace.

Even though the use of the cloud offers an easy way to solve problems with the scalability, availability and reliability of IT services in the form of basic and specialised applications *(FAS – Functional Area Services)*[1], this technology is not a magic solution to all challenges in the field of communications, information technology and cyber

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[1] *Functional area services/FAS* – specialised IT applications dedicated to specialised functions and services within a military organizational entity; e.g. LOGFAS – a package of specialised applications for the logistics field that provides access to data and information, some of which are georeferenced on digital maps, about the existence of material goods, mobility, transport, destination, supplier, beneficiary, operational status etc.

defense in the military environment. We cannot design applications in the cloud and expect them to run forever, nor can we demand that the applications required for static and deployable military systems be delivered in containers as remote provisioned services that can run in the cloud indefinitely and without interruptions. In order to take full advantage of what the cloud has to offer, it is necessary, first of all, to identify those cutting-edge services and applications which will be delivered primarily through cloud infrastructures. Therefore, in order to understand the importance and advantages offered by the native cloud as a process, it is necessary to review what the communication and IT infrastructure offers today, starting from the services developed during the evolution of the Internet and the takeover of commercial technologies in the military environment and for military use.

Subsequently, after a pertinent analysis of the cloud as a process and technology with military applicability, we must identify methods of efficiency and opportunities to use cloud capabilities jointly with other government and/or private organisations so that advantages are obtained maximums for the military establishment from the shared use of what is called, in specialist terms, the *hybrid cloud*.

THE ROAD TO THE CLOUD

Looking at the first IT service solutions in the early days of the Internet, including private data infrastructures, applications were hosted on *physical servers* that had to be purchased and prepared before they could be used. CIS support structures, at the request of the IT teams, had to physically purchase the servers and configure them locally, install custom operating systems for the servers, prepare the installation media for the applications, then deploy core and specialised applications for users, installed on these physical servers. There have been many problems and unfortunately, in the military environment, difficulties with this approach continue to be encountered: servers are underutilised because they are never fully utilised as a resource, it is difficult to run multiple applications simultaneously, and the costs of installation and maintenance are high under the conditions of a sufficiently rigid public procurement system so as to create major difficulties for ensuring maintenance throughout the life cycle of these systems and physical equipment.

Starting from these limitations, *virtualisation* was developed and embraced, including in the military environment, to allow more efficient use of physical servers. Virtualisation creates a logical layer over physical hardware that allows underlying resources such as processors, memory, and storage to be partitioned and shared. Virtualisation has solved many problems related to resource utilisation and multiple hosting of applications, but specialised CIS support structures still need to own the hardware equipment to implement the applications and also bear all the general costs of running the data center. This has given rise to the need to provide and run infrastructure as a service (IaaS[2]), where the servers are owned by third parties which are responsible for the underlying infrastructure on which the applications used by the beneficiary run. Thus began the era of cloud computing, which allowed commercial companies and public institutions to focus on the underlying applications and environments without worrying about the hardware that supported the operation of those applications, the staff resources to maintain it in operation or to configuration problems. IaaS was followed by platform-as-a-service (PaaS/Platform-as-a-Service), which focused on further reducing the effort of the beneficiaries by separating the use of the software in relation to the time of actual use. This meant that software application developers focused on writing application programs and defining infrastructure dependencies, while the service platform would be fully responsible for hosting, running, managing and accessing applications. PaaS paved the way for fully managed cloud services with the advent of software as a service (SaaS), popularly known as "*software on demand*", which provides beneficiaries with access to a specific application

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[2] In a typical IaaS model, a company, regardless of size, consumes services such as compute, storage, and database access from a cloud provider. The cloud provider provides these services by hosting hardware and software in its own physical facilities or in an integrated architectural constellation with well-defined governance, management and usage rules. The company no longer has to purchase and manage its own equipment or premises to host the equipment, and costs move to a pay-as-you-go model. When the company needs fewer resources, it pays less. As it grows, the company can secure access to additional computing resources and other technologies in minutes. In a traditional on-premise scenario, the company manages and maintains its own data center. The company/organisation must invest in servers, storage capacities, software, interfaces and other technologies; they also need to hire IT staff or contractors to acquire, manage and upgrade all equipment and licenses. The data center must be built to meet peak demands, even if sometimes the workload drops and these resources remain idle. Conversely, if the company is growing rapidly, the IT department may struggle to keep up. Text adapted from the source: https://www.oracle.com/ro/cloud/what-is-iaas/, retrieved on 9 December 2022.

as a service for a fee. As cloud computing has gained in popularity, so has the idea of benefiting from cloud-native technologies that would use the cloud more efficiently, while harnessing the full potential of the cloud infrastructure and its various resources. This gave rise to the development of *cloud-native infrastructure* and the creation of cloud-native applications. Cloud-native infrastructure creates an abstraction of the cloud provider's infrastructure and provides the infrastructure with APIs[3] for the purpose of interconnecting this infrastructure with other, similar ones, belonging to the beneficiaries, such as systemic network components. This philosophy of managing infrastructure resources and software applications easily enables scalability and reduction of infrastructure complexity, indirectly improving availability, resiliency and lifecycle maintainability. Similarly, native cloud applications increase the connection between application and infrastructure by incorporating features such as health monitoring, telemetry and metrics, resiliency, network environment microservices, or self-healing.

THE ADOPTION OF CLOUD TECHNOLOGY IN THE MILITARY ENVIRONMENT

It is undeniable that cloud computing technology has changed the way in which the activities of an organisational entity, including the military, are carried out and, implicitly, the information exchange between it and those with which it cooperates at an inter-institutional, corporate or global level, in support of achieving operational efficiency in their own activities, be they of an economic, administrative-governmental or military nature. With the help of the cloud, organisations are now able to streamline their work, quickly implement IT services and digitise their processes.

Everything from human resources, financial reporting, supply chains, to simple mobile applications have benefited from cloud deployments. In addition to considerations of the appropriate deployment model, such as public, hybrid, or private cloud,

organisations also face a decision regarding service models. The three common cloud-computing models each have unique characteristics and help solve specific needs in ways that suit your needs.

Organisations, including those in the public sector, routinely deploy different cloud solutions and use various service models. It becomes essential to remember that regardless of the service model we implement, the question arises whether we can also leverage for the military institution, in addition to its own private cloud, public cloud or hybrid cloud environments. In the event of a positive answer, there will be a need for strategic suppliers for the military institution that guarantee long-term public or hybrid cloud options and that provide continuity in their operation and maintenance over the life cycle for all cloud tools and technologies offered. Through cloud-delivered services, access to applications can be provided anywhere, anytime, and on any device, contributing to new operational and administrative efficiency benefits within the military organisation. When thinking about the right service model, military structures should start by asking themselves: *What is the solution to get the best overall return, with the resources available, for their activity, under conditions of economic efficiency and operational, peace, crisis or war?* It seems that the American partner has found the answer to this question, given the recently published intentions of the Pentagon to launch a competition in the profile market of about 9 billion USD through a contract signed on 7 December 2022 for the so-called multi-year *Joint Warfighting Cloud* project, competition in which Amazon, Google, Microsoft and Oracle will fight to obtain as much as possible of the rights to realise this strategic capability for defense until the year 2028 (Demarest).

The lines of demarcation between IaaS and PaaS have blurred recently as major cloud computing providers offer both in the same environment. IaaS can help organisations achieve cost efficiency with hardware and infrastructure, but PaaS can further reduce administrative overhead and expand usage to beneficiaries less accustomed to high-tech tools. Once a problem is defined that can be solved with a cloud computing solution, military structures can move on to develop the right type of cloud solution, which requires an understanding of Platform-as-a-Service, Infrastructure-as-a-Service and cloud-native applications, which we explore in this article.

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[3] The API is a powerful and versatile means of connecting diverse and disparate software applications. APIs allow a wide range of unrelated software products to integrate and interoperate with other software products and data. APIs also allow developers to add features and functionality to the software using a rich array of other developers' APIs. Source: https://www.techtarget.com/searchapparchitecture/tip/What-are-the-types-of-APIs-and-their-differences, retrieved on 6 December 2022.

With *Infrastructure as a Service (IaaS)*, military organisations can leverage the resources made available by a cloud provider to make cost savings in processing and storage capabilities, as well as gain the ability to scale or rapidly shrink its own deployable capabilities, scalable according to operational design and missions assigned to CIS support structures. With IaaS, beneficiaries can instantly access increased processing and traffic capabilities without making expensive hardware investments. Adopting IaaS in the military environment mainly solves two sets of problems.

The first of these is related to capital expenditure and investment budgeting. Considering the urgent needs, most of the time, for the rapid provision of the extended infrastructure in the mission execution environment and the design of scalable and modular CIS services, adapted to the dynamics of the military environment, it is necessary to have an operational budget at your disposal, as benefiting, for example, multinational security and defense organisations for ongoing missions, as well as certain specialised entities for rapid intervention at the national level, as well as spending on services (O&M/O&M) to enable access to capabilities, based on predefined contractual arrangements, depending on the nature of urgency and the needs of the beneficiaries participating in the mission, without the need to refer to the budget cycle for investments.

The second set of benefits that IaaS can bring to the military system is the management of its own infrastructure. Keeping, continuously upgrading, troubleshooting and maintaining the IT infrastructure is a resource-intensive activity that can be outsourced to an external cloud computing provider, with the maintenance, of course, of those services that particularly concern cyber security and information resource management critical to the military organisation. To determine the strategy for defining the level of implementation of the outsourcing of these infrastructure services based on the IaaS model, agencies and military decision-makers will determine what is the critical threshold to achieve maximum benefits under conditions of maximum operational effectiveness and economic efficiency. From a technical perspective, with IaaS, military CIS structures can expect benefits on the following levels of effort aimed at the capabilities of collecting, processing, analysing and disseminating information, storing data and providing shared access to information/data, depending on the user profile,

With Infrastructure as a Service (IaaS), military organisations can leverage the resources made available by a cloud provider to make cost savings in processing and storage capabilities, as well as gain the ability to scale or rapidly shrink its own deployable capabilities, scalable according to operational design and missions assigned to CIS support structures.

as well as ensuring data redundancy/backup and disaster recovery, as follows:
- scalable solutions for processing and extended data storage capabilities;
- IT infrastructure cost control based on time and capacity used;
- optimisation of network resources through automation;
- reducing costs with the purchase and maintenance over the life cycle of hardware equipment;
- reducing the pressure on the highly qualified personnel resource, which requires a long time of training and specialisation and whose retention in the military organisation is increasingly difficult;
- quick access to services for operation in conditions of maximum mobility of the organisational entities benefiting from these services in the static, but especially deployable environment.

But IaaS is not the only cloud service model, it should be part of a larger cloud strategy that includes PaaS, which offers additional benefits in a complete cloud solution. By implementing PaaS in cyberspace with military use, it gives the external service provider more responsibility to manage and optimise the cloud environment, which can lead to reduced IT administration expenses and increased performance of providing these services. Simultaneously with the adoption and application of the *"Zero Trust"*[4] security model in military infrastructures and systems, PaaS can be an essential evolution for the military organisation through its potential to leverage outsourced application management layers, including SaaS provisioning and the data that constitute information resources, analytical applications, and applications for mobile and deployable systems. In particular, PaaS can benefit military structures by:
- greater efficiency in the use of personnel resources in the field of IT program development;
- enhanced CIS security through cloud process automation, protection and updates for infrastructure management without human intervention;

Simultaneously with the adoption and application of the "Zero Trust" security model in military infrastructures and systems, PaaS can be an essential evolution for the military organisation through its potential to leverage outsourced application management layers, including SaaS provisioning and the data that constitute information resources, analytical applications, and applications for mobile and deployable systems.

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[4] Innovative approach to the concept of IT protection introduced almost a decade ago by John Kindervag, an analyst at Forester Research at the time, which makes susceptibility the *centerpiece* of a cyber security strategy called *Zero Trust*, i.e. nothing can be trusted, always the identity and authenticity of a network query must be verified – article ul *The Zero trust security model, benefits and implementation possibilities*, Datanet System Integration, https:// datanets.ro , retrieved on 9 December 2022.

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- increased performance in providing services, given the limited access in time and volume, depending on the type and tempo of military activities;
- increased resilience based on increased fault tolerance and availability of cloud services.

In context, there could be the question or even the prejudice among technical experts and resource analysts that we would no longer need IT management or expertise, cloud architects or database administrators in the private military environment, given the access government or hybrid public cloud resources. The answer is as simple as it is true: there will always be a need for *tech-savvy resource* in the military, as the role of these experts will now focus on the qualitative adaptation of the use of applications to the needs of military users, on ensuring adequate technical support for management informational, the implementation of the architectural security model appropriate to the type of activity based on operational design and access and sharing architecture oriented to the profile and roles held in the organisation. It is equally true that some of the infrastructure and service administration activities, especially those services common to the entire organisational entity will become more efficient by eliminating redundancy between administrators and by reducing operation and maintenance costs, also considering the resources used for architectural design, system implementation and configuration management with own resources of expertise and operation. Focusing the work of CIS experts in the army on the development of proprietary applications, based on software resources provided in the cloud as PaaS and/or SaaS, including the use of cloud-native applications, will lead to the rapid obtaining for the benefit of users of support appropriate to their own needs, starting from to operational requirements which, most of the time, are difficult to interpret without an adequate *knowledge management* process leading to the identification of CIS resource requirements and their effective allocation in support of those who use them, in particular user communities in the operational and warfighter environment. Rapid exploration of service support requirements in deployable and mobile environments, identification of information flows and data and information access needs, based on matrixes with information exchange requirements, process management in permanent or temporary military activities and actions,

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creation virtual environment of centralised and computerised data management *(data lake)* with the role of allowing the timely identification of relevant information for the user with a personalised profile, there are as many challenges that face us before adopting a certain architecture for access to available resources in a private, hybrid or public cloud.

CLOUD CHALLENGES AND RESISTANCE TO CHANGE

Commercial cloud providers have become a dominant solution for *enterprise applications*[5] as market demands and operational needs in the public and government space have grown. This approach offers advantages such as higher availability and scalability, along with the flexibility to design applications in a way that indicates the use of cloud services from the outset.

However, when cloud solutions were first introduced, many challenges were considered by potential beneficiaries, including security, cost effective management, compliance or performance. It is appreciated in the literature (Singh, Kehoe, 2022) that those initial challenges are now a thing of the past for most cloud consumers, as advances have been made both in the technologies applied by cloud providers and in the way that consumer organisations implement cloud solutions, taking into account their own particularities and needs. Obviously, although they have come a long way, this does not mean that cloud technologies are perfect. What matters for a possible design of the application of the hybrid model of implementing the cloud in the military environment is that it has reached a sufficient maturity in the profile market, that it becomes not only opportune, but also mandatory to analyse whether or not there is a need for outsourcing some cloud services for the information system in cyberspace with military use. By the nature of the evolution in the digital transformation process

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[5] Being a comprehensive solution at the scale of the organisation, including the military type, this implementation has the role of solving a problem or streamlining a critical process for the modernisation and development of the organisation or to increase the performance of the information exchange system inside or outside the organisation. Gartner, a well-known research and consulting company, defines *enterprise* applications as being designed to *"integrate software solutions into a single system with which to carry out all the operations of a company to facilitate cooperation and coordination of activity throughout the organization. Enterprise applications also have the role of connecting the organization with suppliers, business partners and customers"*, https://www.roweb.ro/ro/blog/ce-sunt-aplicatiile-enterprise, retrieved on 7 January 2023.

at the national, inter-institutional, European or North-Atlantic Alliance level and with expansion and interdependencies on a global scale, the virtual space with military use is already exposed to the phenomenon of integration and federalisation in the virtual environment. If we continue to turn our backs on hybrid cloud solutions (own private cloud, supplemented with access to outsourced infrastructure and services), there is a risk of delaying the implementation and operationalisation of military-use cyberspace with high costs and additional effort that is difficult to justify.

Certainly, the decisions regarding the adoption of hybrid cloud solutions must take into account the particularities of the military system, in terms of security and cyber defense in general, respectively the requirements for the preparation of platforms and access interfaces in particular, the profile of users with specific rights for the use of information resources depending on the role and functions performed by applying the *"Zero Trust"* model, but, we consider, the most difficult component in the implementation of such a construct – the contractual and cooperative relationship for an indefinite period with the strategic supplier/suppliers cloud services and applications, potentially usable in the military organisation.

A number of challenges in adopting a solution suitable for the military cloud environment remain under consideration, such as:

❖ *too many choices*: there are a lot of cloud providers with a wide range of services and this entails the need to have expert architects and engineers to build teams capable of operating the services and using them according to technical requirements and operational in the military organisation. But the training time, functional area specialisation and retention of these engineers are difficult, unfortunately, as the current reality shows;

❖ *rapid development of cloud services and technologies*: a large number of new cloud services are launched by cloud provider giants such as Amazon, Microsoft or Google. This leads to a greater need to train military engineers capable of taking on these new services and a greater need for knowledge to maintain these services as applications upgrade through new releases;

❖ *successive generations of technology solutions*: as the transition to the cloud era is realised, the architecture of applications that come from various generations of infrastructure solutions, from data

centers based on physical servers to virtual machines, to containers, respectively to no server technologies gets complicated. Migrating applications requires a significant effort to understand advanced technology elements and how to use them to their maximum capacity based on operational and technical performance;

❖ *ever-increasing systemic complexity:* These rapidly growing technologies, combined with the accelerated migration of workloads to the cloud, have given rise to life-cycle operations and maintenance (O&M) complexity by, among other things, increasing the stack of tracked, such as storage systems, security models, governance models and/or management platforms;

❖ *the evolution of the operational domains and, implicitly, of the informational ones in the multinational and inter-institutional military environment*: the functional services in continuous development in the operational domains (land, air, naval, cyber and space) where the armed forces operate, generated at the inter-institutional level by the National Security System, as well as the scale of military activities carried out by multinational operational entities on the territory of the country (corps, division, brigade, battle groups, etc.) or outside it in the theaters of operations creates difficulties from the perspective of using the principles of federalisation in the mission execution environment or military operation; combined with the specific application areas of each user in command points and headquarters and the multitude of proprietary software solution providers, it is necessary to apply a well-defined set of standards in the field of the military cloud and, hence, interoperable interface solutions between different applied systems and solutions;

❖ *data management and artificial intelligence models:* the forms of organisation, storage, access and dissemination of data, the technological tools available for architectural developments in IT, the intelligent rapid analysis solutions for identifying and providing data, respectively transforming them into information for the user, intelligent machines that process through knowledge, the emergence of the DevOps culture as an architectural model that allows an application that once took a long time to develop can now be launched in a few minutes are just as many challenges before those who have the responsibility to identify and apply the more appropriate solutions for cloud deployment in the military environment.

As the transition to the cloud era is realised, the architecture of applications that come from various generations of infrastructure solutions, from data centers based on physical servers to virtual machines, to containers, respectively to no server technologies gets complicated. Migrating applications requires a significant effort to understand advanced technology elements and how to use them to their maximum capacity based on operational and technical performance.

The forms of organisation, storage, access and dissemination of data, the technological tools available for architectural developments in IT, the intelligent rapid analysis solutions for identifying and providing data, respectively transforming them into information for the user, intelligent machines that process through knowledge, the emergence of the DevOps culture as an architectural model that allows an application that once took a long time to develop can now be launched in a few minutes are just as many challenges before those who have the responsibility to identify and apply the more appropriate solutions for cloud deployment in the military environment.

Therefore, despite the multiple advantages that the cloud introduces as an architectural model for the management and use of information technology services in the military system, there are a number of complexities that determine the extent, speed of adoption and identification of potential hybrid model providers, government institutions and commercial operators, but none of these complexities and possible limitations represent insurmountable obstacles and, moreover, do not diminish the need for pertinent analysis for the adoption of hybrid cloud solutions in the military environment.

CONCLUSIONS

In this article, I have tried to present, with the help of bibliographic references and based on current efforts in the field of developing national military capabilities focused on cloud computing, how cloud-native technologies can influence the adoption of feasible, timely and effective solutions for military systems of communications and information technology.

Starting from an understanding of the technological journey through which the cloud has become popular and how it has rapidly evolved in the public and commercial space, from physical hardware equipment passing through virtualisation to the self-managed serverless working environment using applications native software in the cloud, I want to bring to the attention of those involved in the design and implementation of military capabilities in cyberspace intended to support joint-type operations in multiple operational domains (multi/all-domain operations: land, sea, air, space and cyberspace) the need to apply good practices, technical standards and CIS security models to implement and expand the use of the latest technologies for the military environment.

I also understand the challenges that the evolving adoption of the cloud in the multi-level classified network environment implies and, above all, the difficulties generated by resistance to the changes introduced by the use of cloud-native technologies and applications in the cyberspace controlled by the institutions of the national system of security. The technical solutions for adopting cloud computing and related technologies native to this service delivery model are constantly evolving, but their adoption and use to the benefit of military

The technical solutions for adopting cloud computing and related technologies native to this service delivery model are constantly evolving, but their adoption and use to the benefit of military organisational entities is only a matter of understanding, will and our decision to adapt to digital transformation processes and to step over the not so much technological, but especially cultural-organisational barriers today.

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ROMANIA AND POLAND
UNDER THE INTERSECTIONALITY LENS
– A CROSS-NATIONAL COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS
OF NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGIES –

Teodora-Ioana MORARU

"Nicolae Bălcescu" Land Forces Academy, Sibiu

The present study explores the role of intersectionality in defining the national security strategies of Romania and Poland through a constructivist lens. The study utilizes document analysis to identify the degree to which intersectionality is incorporated into the national security approach. Although both countries recognize the importance of intersectionality in national security, their strategies differ in terms of implementation and effectiveness. The study highlights the need for a more inclusive and diverse approach to national security, one that recognizes the complex nature of security threats. Through this scientific article, the importance of critical understanding of national security is emphasized, one that transcends traditional state-centric approaches and recognizes the role of non-state actors and transnational challenges in shaping security dynamics. The study can provide a valuable insight for policymakers and practitioners seeking to promote inclusive and effective security policies and practices in a changing global landscape.

Keywords: intersectionality; national security; Poland; constructivism; Romania;

INTRODUCTION

The current international society faces multiple threats to European security that can destabilize the region and have global effects. The political, economic, and social changes in recent decades have brought to the fore the importance of national security and security policies, which must be adapted to new challenges and reflect new trends in the evolution of the security situation. In this context, studying intersectionality in national strategic documents such as security strategies represents an innovative and relevant approach to developing and adapting security policies promoted internationally.

This article analyses the national security strategies of Romania and Poland, concerning the role of intersectionality in preventing risks and threats to European security, in relation to relevant European strategic documents. Therefore, the article aims to provide a transnational comparative analysis of these two states, under the lens of intersectionality, viewed as a dual cultural-feminist perspective, which can contribute to promoting a mindset change at the strategic level with regard to the implementation of measures and directions of action adapted to the geopolitical context in an efficient and inclusive manner.

The study is based on the constructivist perspective of security, according to which security threats are social constructions based on identities and power relationships. In this context, studying intersectionality in national security strategies can provide a more complex perspective on the factors contributing to instability and insecurity in the region, in terms of manipulating the masses by promoting discriminatory and socially unfair elements by hostile state and non-state actors, under the auspices of subversive influence on the public opinion in European society.

The political, economic, and social changes in recent decades have brought to the fore the importance of national security and security policies, which must be adapted to new challenges and reflect new trends in the evolution of the security situation.

THE CURRENT STATE OF RESEARCH IN THE FIELD

Intersectionality is a theoretical framework that recognizes how different identities and social categories interact to generate unique and intersecting forms of oppression and privilege (Crenshaw, 1989, p. 139; McCall, 2005, p. 1772). The concept of intersectionality first emerged in studies related to feminist movements in the United States of America during the 1980s and the 1990s, as a way to approach multi-axial limitations of identity politics and recognize the complexity and diversity of social identities (Collins, 2000, p. 222; Hankivsky, 2014, p. 13). The term was brought to the attention of the academic community by researcher Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989) to describe the unique challenges faced by women of colour in the legal system in the United States of America, where discrimination based on race or gender was often considered separately, without recognizing the combined effects of both.

Intersectionality argues that social identities are not additive or separate, but they mutually influence each other in complex and context-specific ways (McCall, 2005, p. 1775). According to Cho (2019), *"intersectionality acknowledges that social identities are interconnected and mutually influence how individuals navigate the world"* (Cho, 2019, p. 45). This perspective emphasizes that discrimination and marginalization do not occur based on a single identity, but can manifest as a result of the combination and recombination of different identities perceived at the social level. For example, the discriminatory experience of a person based on the sexual orientation may be different depending on race, class, or other identities (Bowleg, 2012, p. 1268).

Intersectionality has been applied in a wide range of academic fields, including sociology, political science, anthropology, and public health, among others (Hankivsky, 2012, p. 3). In the context of national security, an intersectional approach would seek to address the unique and intersecting security challenges facing diverse communities and promote more inclusive and effective security policies and practices (Wibben, 2014, p. 10). This approach reiterates that national security is not just about protecting the state from external threats, but also about addressing the underlying causes of insecurity and conflicts within societies (Tickner, 2013, p. 9). By examining the intersection of cultural

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diversity and gender equality, more nuanced and effective approaches to national security can be developed, where the intersecting nature of security challenges is recognized and social justice and human rights can be promoted (Shepherd, 2016, p. 41).

Recent research has shown an increasing interest in applying intersectionality in the context of national security. In his book, MacLeod (2018) explores the intersectional approach and the extent to which it can help to better understand the causes of insecurity in countries in Asia, Africa, and Latin America, as well as to find more effective and inclusive solutions to these problems. MacLeod also emphasizes the importance of an intersectional approach to security in the context of global migration policies (MacLeod, 2018). The author includes in his research explanations of the causes of sexual violence in the context of inter-ethnic conflicts and establishes the importance of more detailed government-level studies on possible measures to protect minority communities.

Another example of an intersectional approach applied to the field of national security is the research conducted by Hagen (2019), in which the role of mixed gender identities in creating a climate of domestic insecurity at the state and international security alliance levels is analysed. Hagen argues that an intersectional approach can help identify vulnerabilities generated by communities such as LGBTQ+ and determine their needs in order to eliminate and prevent them from evolving into national security threats or risks. The author suggests that these *"internal sensitivities"* of the state can only be managed through the implementation of inclusive measures to integrate members of these communities into society, as ignoring social realities generates inevitable developments of existing vulnerabilities. Additionally, Hagen argues that an intersectional perspective can help develop more comprehensive and effective security policies for refugees in developed countries such as Norway.

Another relevant work in the field is the study by Nyhagen and Dawes (2020) on how intersectional and decolonial perspectives can be integrated into the study of human security and state development. The authors argue that integrating the two concepts into national policies can contribute to addressing threats generated by the inequity

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of power relations at the inter-state level and developing more inclusive security policies and practices.

Other recent studies have examined how intersectional and decolonial perspectives can be applied to specific areas of national security, such as cybersecurity (Zhang, 2020) or counterterrorism (Pyszczynski, Neumann, Clemens, 2020). For example, Zhang (2020) argues that such an approach can help develop more effective policies and practices in the field of cybersecurity that address the intersection of gender, race, class, and other social identities. At the same time, Pyszczynski et al. (2020) argue that intersectional and decolonial perspectives can completely eliminate vulnerabilities associated with the discrimination and marginalization of Muslim communities in states that have declared themselves part of the fight against terrorism. According to researcher Taneja (2020), an intersectional approach to counterterrorism would lead to acceptance and legitimization of the hypothesis that different groups are vulnerable to different forms of terrorism, depending on the social identities they assume and that policies must be adapted to address these social security vulnerabilities (Taneja, p. 183).

Another area of research has examined the intersections between gender, race, and security. In her book, Cohn (2018) argues that the traditional, realist vision associated with security has largely ignored gender and race aspects in reference to human security, leading to the formation of national security policies that perpetuate violence and oppression against minority communities (Cohn, p. 7). Cohn advocates for a feminist and intersectional approach to security that takes the form of a harmonious product of interconnected conjugation of different forms of oppression against minority or socially unacceptable communities and proposes a series of measures to eliminate the discrepancy between the expected state of security and the state of security that develops in social reality.

Researchers have also explored the relationship between disability and the concept of security. In their article, Shah and Embrick (2020) argue that disability is often ignored in discussions of human security, even though people with disabilities are disproportionately affected by insecurity and violence (Shah, Embrick, 2020, p. 60). They offer

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an intersectional perspective on disability, linking the physical and mental impairments of individuals in society to the measures and directions of action proposed by national security strategies regarding human security. According to them, these vulnerabilities take the form of unique but similar challenges, so that arranging measures to eliminate social hazards for people with disabilities will not require expertise, but only involvement in the concrete problems of individuals.

Scientific articles have also been identified that analyse in parallel the extent to which race and gender have become vulnerabilities of human security in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. In her study, Allen (2020) argues that the pandemic has exposed and exacerbated existing racial and gender-based inequalities, leading to a disproportionate impact of the threat posed by the SARS-CoV-2 virus on marginalized communities (Allen, p. 81). Allen highlights the need for an intersectional approach to public health and social security, which can identify the causes of intensifying inequalities felt by different social communities and categorize them as vulnerabilities or risks to national security, on the social dimension.

In addition to academic research, there are also examples of the application of the intersectional approach in institutional practice. In 2019, the US Department of Defense announced that it would examine more closely how identities intersect and affect national security, to implement measures of integration and social acceptance for marginalized communities (Cho, 2019). This decision was influenced, in part, by research in the field, which demonstrated the degree to which identities can influence how individuals perceive threats to national security and how they can be distinctly affected by security policies related to social dimensions.

Therefore, intersectionality is a crucial concept in understanding the complexity of identities and social experiences, as well as how they intersect and influence each other in different contexts. Applying an intersectional perspective to national security can help address the unique and complex security challenges faced by multi-ethnic communities and promote more effective security policies and practices.

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THE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research revolves around the idea that a theoretical framework based on intersectionality can bring a new and relevant perspective on how states approach national security. Thus, the present research postulates the following thesis: an intersectional approach to national security could bring added value in understanding the complexity and diversity of threats, risks, and vulnerabilities related to the social dimension of national security, and thus optimal ways of addressing dysfunctions can be established.

Starting from the interest shown in the last decade in Identity-Based Security (IBS) approach, the concept of intersectionality has become increasingly used in the discourses and security policies promoted by European states. This research aims to explore the impact of this approach on national security.

In this regard, the general objective of the research is to analyse how the intersectional approach to national security can be useful in eliminating European social vulnerabilities.

The secondary objectives are as follows:

- To identify the degree of implementation of the intersectional approach in the national security documents of Romania and Poland;
- To evaluate the similarities and differences of the identified vulnerabilities, in accordance with the social reality signalled by large-scale social movements.

Based on these objectives, the research will formulate and test the following specific hypotheses:

- The intersectional approach to national security in Romania and Poland is effective in managing and limiting the manifestation of specific social risks related to European security;
- Romania's national security strategy is not sufficiently developed to optimally implement the intersectional approach;
- There are limitations in implementing a broader intersectional approach in Romania's national security strategy.

To test these hypotheses, according to the established research directions, qualitative research methods will be used: document analysis and content analysis, followed by a comparative analysis.

Starting from the interest shown in the last decade in Identity-Based Security (IBS) approach, the concept of intersectionality has become increasingly used in the discourses and security policies promoted by European states.

Document analysis will be conducted to identify and analyse key aspects of the intersectional approach in the national security strategies of Romania and Poland, while content analysis will examine the degree of implementation of this approach at both declarative and practical levels, identifying its effectiveness in addressing relevant social vulnerabilities.

Document analysis is a non-reactive research method used after social events have taken place, so that their development is not influenced by the researcher or their presence in social life (Chelcea, Mărginean, Cauc, 1998, p. 333). Recent studies define document analysis as *"a research method that is based on collecting and analysing documents that have been intentionally or unintentionally produced in the past and that are relevant to the research subject"* (Krippendorff, 2019, p. 10). Other authors describe document analysis as involving *"a careful examination of written, printed, or electronic documents to identify relevant patterns, themes, or trends for the research subject"* (Bazeley, 2018, p. 137). This approach involves analysing the information available regarding possible biases of the source (Somekh, Lewin, 2005, p. 1). In this study, document analysis will be used to extract information in relation to key elements of the intersectional approach in the national security strategies of Romania and Poland.

Content analysis is a qualitative research method used to examine the content of text or other communication materials, such as images, sounds or videos. This method involves identifying and coding relevant units of content, followed by analysing them to identify patterns, themes and trends. This method can be applied at different levels of analysis, from individual to organizational or societal levels (Hesse-Biber, Leavy, 2019, p. 278). According to Krippendorff (2019), content analysis is *"a research method that can be used to make reliable and valid inferences about the meanings communicated through messages. It is a systematic and rigorous process of identifying, coding, and validating patterns and themes in communication data, regardless of the type of media in which they appear, including texts, images, and sounds"* (Krippendorff, p. 21). Using content analysis can help researchers understand the meaning of messages conveyed through different forms of communication, as well as identify cultural and social

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representations within them (Krippendorff, 2019, p.12). This method can be used in various research fields, such as psychology, sociology, political science or communication studies (Bazeley, 2018, p. 142).

Charles Ragin (1989, p. 300) states that the division between qualitative and quantitative research in social sciences is essential, especially when it comes to comparative research. Comparative analysis is an alternative to multivariate statistical analysis, which can be used in both causal-analytic and holistic or interpretive-historical approaches, treating each case as a separate entity, thus allowing for generalization (Ragin, ib.). Comparative analysis involves *"comparing two or more elements of a data set or separate cases to identify differences and similarities between them"* (Hesse-Biber, Leavy, 2019, p. 278). The research method can be used at various levels of analysis, from individuals to organizations, communities, or states. In comparative analysis, researchers have various sources of information, such as symbols, case studies, social groups, and comparisons between international policies and practices. In studies involving narrative strategies, discourse and content analysis, the research method takes the form of a comparison in terms of contrasts and similarities (Given, 2008, p. 100).

The limitations of this research include subjective factors such as cognitive bias regarding the Romanian social reality (in this sense, citizens' initiatives and actions are evaluated to provide non-subjective research results), the lack of knowledge of the Polish language (however, Poland's national security strategy is written in English), as well as a limited understanding of the social contexts that underpinned the establishment of national security threats, risks, and vulnerabilities in the social domain in the two states in question. Additionally, there is a possibility that some countries may not adopt a formal intersectional approach to national security but may apply informal practices that reflect this approach.

Charles Ragin states that the division between qualitative and quantitative research in social sciences is essential, especially when it comes to comparative research. Comparative analysis is an alternative to multivariate statistical analysis, which can be used in both causal-analytic and holistic or interpretive-historical approaches, treating each case as a separate entity, thus allowing for generalization.

NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGIES OF ROMANIA AND POLAND: COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS FROM AN INTERSECTIONAL PERSPECTIVE

Given that the research analyses how the intersectional approach to national security can be useful in addressing social vulnerabilities identified at the European level, comparing the national security strategies of Romania and Poland from an intersectional perspective is crucial for testing the specific hypotheses.

Based on the National Defence Strategy for the Period 2020-2024 (2020, pp. 30-40), Romania aims to respond to threats, risks, and vulnerabilities to national security through the following directions for action:

❖ The political dimension:
  • Strengthening institutional capacity and the national security system;
  • Developing a coherent legal framework for national security;
  • Increasing the involvement of civil society in the decision-making process and the implementation of national security policies.
❖ The military dimension:
  • Improving defence and rapid response capabilities to possible aggressions;
  • Developing cooperation and interoperability with international partners in the field of security and defence;
  • Improving the capacity to protect land, sea and air borders.
❖ The social dimension:
  • Combating and preventing radicalization and violent extremism, as well as promoting diversity and social inclusion;
  • Protecting citizens' fundamental rights and freedoms;
  • Improving cybersecurity and personal data protection.
❖ The cultural dimension:
  • Promoting and protecting national cultural values and heritage;
  • Improving the capacity to monitor and prevent threats to cultural heritage.
❖ The ecological dimension:
  • Protecting and conserving natural resources and the environment;

Based on the National Defence Strategy for the Period 2020-2024, Romania aims to respond to threats, risks, and vulnerabilities to national security through the following directions for action: political, military, social, cultural, ecological, economic.

- Preventing and managing natural and technological disasters;
- Developing sustainable critical infrastructure and energy resources.

❖ The economic dimension:

- Protecting critical infrastructure and economic resources;
- Developing a secure and competitive business environment;
- Protecting against economic threats and economic espionage.

Overall, it can be observed that Romania places great importance on developing defence and security capabilities, cooperating with international partners, as well as on combating and preventing violent extremism and cyber threats. At the same time, attention is given to protecting the environment and promoting cultural values and national heritage.

In the National Defence Strategy for the Period 2020-2024, the term *"intersectionality"* is not mentioned or recognized as a concept that can explain vulnerabilities at the social dimension level. In terms of directions for action, vulnerabilities associated with the intersectional perspective are addressed generically, through formulations such as *"the strict and non-discriminatory application of the law [...] and the cultivation of tolerance at the civil society level"* (Ib., p. 16), *"the simultaneous promotion of democratic values, such as pluralism, civic participation, tolerance and non-discrimination, and cooperation in a multicultural context"* (Ib., p. 37).

This general approach to the intersectional perspective can be explained by the risk of weakening the image of public institutions in front of the society, since, as a social practice, movements opposing cultural openness have been observed, with a focus on social acceptance of certain legal actions by deviant genders (see the impact of the discussion about marriage between people with different sexual orientations in the public domain). Thus, in relation to social reality, there are limitations in implementing a broader intersectional approach in Romania's National Defence Strategy even from the perspective of avoiding the manifestation of the risk of perpetuating existing cultural identity divisions and tensions.

Romania places great importance on developing defence and security capabilities, cooperating with international partners, as well as on combating and preventing violent extremism and cyber threats. At the same time, attention is given to protecting the environment and promoting cultural values and national heritage.

The analysis of the second proposed strategic document, the National Security Strategy of Poland (President of the Republic of Poland, 2020, pp. 13-36), reveals the following main directions for action:

❖ The political dimension:

- Consolidation of Poland's dignity and sovereignty;
- Promotion of civil liberties and human rights;
- Promotion of democracy and the rule of law within Poland and globally;
- Strengthening regional and international cooperation to enhance Poland's security.

❖ The military dimension:

- Consolidation of Poland's defence and military capabilities;
- Promotion of cooperation and solidarity within NATO and with other military partners;
- Strengthening the capacity to counter aggressive actions and military threats.

❖ The social dimension:

- Strengthening social cohesion and socio-economic integration;
- Promotion of gender equality and women's rights;
- Combating discrimination and extremism.

❖ The cultural dimension:

- Promotion of Polish culture and national identity;
- Protection of Poland's cultural and historical heritage.

❖ The ecological dimension:

- Consolidation of energy security and reducing dependence on energy imports;
- Protection of Poland's environment and natural resources;
- Promotion of sustainable development and addressing climate change.

❖ The economic dimension:

- Promotion of economic growth and competitiveness of Poland;
- Consolidation of economic security through diversification of markets and products;
- Protection of critical infrastructure and important economic data for Poland's security.

The National Security Strategy of Poland reveals the following main directions for action: political, military, social, cultural, ecological, economic.

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Overall, Poland places great importance on consolidating sovereignty, dignity, and military capabilities, as well as on protecting energy and economic security. There is also a significant concern for promoting human rights, gender equality, and social cohesion. Poland wants to strengthen regional and international cooperation to enhance the country's security, as well as protect the country's cultural and historical heritage.

Similar to Romania's security strategy, the term *"intersectionality"* is not mentioned or contextualized in terms of social or other vulnerabilities or risks in the Polish strategic reference document, and the directions for action do not clearly and specifically involve this approach. Poland's position regarding the intersectional approach to security is highlighted in the following objectives: *"Formation and development of patriotic attitudes as indispensable factors in building a national community and identity grounded in Christian heritage and universal values [...] promoting the development and protection of traditional values of the family, Polish national identity, culture, and tradition"* (President of the Republic of Poland, 2020, p. 28). Thus, it can be concluded that the Polish state does not intend to implement such a social approach to security, despite movements and protests against the government. In 2019, the Polish government issued the *"Law against homosexual propaganda"*, which prohibited public expression of sexual orientation if it did not conform to the traditional Christian view. As a result of massive protests by the LGBTQ+ community in several cities in Poland, in October 2020, the Polish Constitutional Court issued a decision invalidating this law. Additionally, following the banning of abortions in April 2021, massive protests by female citizens were organized, which are currently being manifested online through the #StrajkKobiet movement, which translates as *"Women's Strike"*.

RESEARCH RESULTS

For a clearer view of the implementation of the intersectional perspective in national security documents by the Romanian and Polish states, a table has been compiled, including the research results *(Table no. 1)*.

"Formation and development of patriotic attitudes as indispensable factors in building a national community and identity grounded in Christian heritage and universal values [...] promoting the development and protection of traditional values of the family, Polish national identity, culture, and tradition" represent fundamental objectives regarding the intersectional approach to security.

Table no. 1: Research results

Criteria for comparative analysis \ Reference document	National Security Strategy of Romania	National Security Strategy of Poland
Implementation of the intersectional security approach	YES (Partially)	NO
Existence of social vulnerabilities/risks associated with an intersectional perspective	YES	YES
Existence of discrepancies between proposed measures and vulnerabilities/risks associated with social reality	NO	YES
Existence of discrepancies in the implementation of the intersectional security vision	Cannot be determined	

The first hypothesis states that the intersectional approach to national security in Romania and Poland is effective in managing and limiting the manifestation of specific social risks related to European security. To that end, the two strategic documents are comparatively analysed.

Specific hypothesis number 1 is partially confirmed, as it is found that after the implementation of the intersectional approach to security in Romania's National Defence Strategy for the period 2020-2024, public discussions regarding the rights of communities with different sexual orientations do not have the same level of intensity as before. In the case of Poland's National Security Strategy, it clearly establishes the promoted social and cultural values, traditionally Christian, alongside a non-negotiation policy towards deviations.

Specific hypothesis number 1 is partially confirmed, as it is found that, after the implementation of the intersectional approach to security in Romania's National Defence Strategy for the period 2020-2024, public discussions regarding the rights of communities with different sexual orientations do not have the same level of intensity as before.

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Specific hypothesis number 2 asserts that Romania's national security strategy is not sufficiently developed to optimally implement the intersectional approach. Following the document analysis conducted, a partial implementation of the intersectional approach is found, with deficiencies being observed in terms of the generality of proposed measures and the lack of concrete identification of social risks indicated by the European perspective of intersectionality.

Specific hypothesis number 3 asserts that there are limitations in implementing a broader intersectional approach in Romania's national security strategy. To test this hypothesis, the causes of limitations are examined and compared with Poland's non-negotiation policy. In the case of Romania, limitations in implementing an open approach to intersectional security are due to the avoidance of perpetuating divisions and cultural identity tensions, as well as the risk of weakening public institutions' image in front of the society, given the social movements opposing cultural openness in Romania.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the conducted research, the specific hypotheses have been partially and fully confirmed, and the objectives of the research have been achieved. It has been confirmed that the implementation of the intersectional approach within the national security strategies of Romania and Poland is limited in both countries, and the social vulnerabilities identified are similar in terms of gender issues, migration, cultural-religious diversity, and discrimination.

Furthermore, it should be noted that during the research, it has become evident that Romania's national security strategy is not sufficiently developed to optimally implement the intersectional approach. Additionally, this strategy does not identify all social vulnerabilities, which can lead to significant risks for Romanian society. Although the implementation of an intersectional approach can be useful in addressing these vulnerabilities, there is a clear need for the development and improvement of the reference document to ensure the capability to effectively respond to the social needs of the Romanian state.

On the other hand, Poland's non-negotiation policy regarding the intersectional perspective of security and traditional Christian values

The implementation of the intersectional approach within the national security strategies of Romania and Poland is limited in both countries, and the social vulnerabilities identified are similar in terms of gender issues, migration, cultural-religious diversity, and discrimination.

of the family generates significant risks. Ignoring the identified social vulnerabilities and refusing to address and manage them can lead to the emergence of violent manifestations against the government and can create the conditions for the manifestation of risks with major impact and low probability at a state and regional level.

In conclusion, this research has demonstrated the usefulness of the intersectional approach in eliminating European social vulnerabilities. However, there needs to be a more robust and developed approach to the national security strategies of the analysed states from a social perspective, to avoid strategic surprises as a result of sudden developments in existing social vulnerabilities, elements that can take the form of regional social chaos, combined with the existing instability in European society. Therefore, there is a need for continuous debate and permanent attention to the way European states can effectively address social vulnerabilities within national security strategies and other reference documents.

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UKRAINE AND THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION PRAXIS IN TERMS OF TERRITORIAL CONQUESTS

Mircea STAN

University of Bucharest
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The hypothesis of the article is that the Russian Federation has developed a praxis in terms of territorial conquests, based on historical reminiscences, and it will not be renounced, especially in the case of Ukraine. By immersing in history, without making it a determinant of the present and without showing psittacism, we believe that the assertiveness of the Russian Federation in its proximity can be justified only from its point of view. The brutal and completely illegal intervention in Ukraine is an example of reality violation.

The end of communism and the dissolution of the USSR have generated resentment among the Russians, which denotes capitulation. The Russians have probably rejoiced for a while over the end of totalitarianism, but they have constantly regretted the loss of the empire. The "Russian world" is, in fact, nothing but a form of virtual restoration of the Soviet empire, a trap of the past, in the souls and minds of the Russians, a ferment whose purpose is the internal destruction of the states that emerged after the collapse of the USSR, preventing them, by injecting feelings of confusion and nostalgia, to overcome the post-Soviet stage.

Keywords: Russian Federation; praxis; Ukraine; war; international system;

THE INTERNATIONAL SYSTEM RE-EVALUATION FROM THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION PERSPECTIVE

The war in Ukraine: an epiphenomenon of the international system conceptualization following the *Westphalian* model

All the dominant theories of international relations are an emanation of the international system established after the Peace of Westphalia in 1648. It has resulted in freezing the international system conceptualization in the *Westphalian* logic. Moreover, it creates the premises for narrowing the ability to understand premodern international systems, as the historically promoted vision results in the inability to answer the questions of modern international system. *Westphalian* logic acts as a Procustean straitjacket over any other, more permissive, theory related to international systems. Moreover, it is undeniably true that the structural innovation of the Peace of Westphalia, which led to the emergence of a new type of political actor as a unit of the international system, the sovereign state/nation state, still applies today, with some adjustments. However, being lacking in the ability to understand the international system beyond the perspective of *Westphalian* reasoning, having sovereignty as its basic attribute, generates the propensity of historical processes towards conflicts. Therefore, we believe that the historical perspective identifies the moments of the international systems critical transformation. In this regard, the war in Ukraine is an epiphenomenon of the international system conceptualization following the *Westphalian* model.

The main method used in the present approach is that of historical research, which is based on scientific rigour. It is the scientific rigour that, when applied to the study of some conflicts – in our case, the one in Ukraine, analysed as part of the Russian Federation praxis in terms of territorial conquests –, requires the introduction of criteria and rules that differentiate between what is false and what is true.

It is undeniably true that the structural innovation of the Peace of Westphalia, which led to the emergence of a new type of political actor as a unit of the international system, the sovereign state/nation state, still applies today, with some adjustments. However, being lacking in the ability to understand the international system beyond the perspective of Westphalian reasoning, having sovereignty as its basic attribute, generates the propensity of historical processes towards conflicts.

Without diving deep into historical epistemology, we note that the effort of documenting the article has been focused on the establishment of some relative truths, because the process of historical knowledge is inexhaustible. History is an ideographic science (according to the Neo-Kantian School of Baden, A.N.), because it does not formulate experimental laws that can be tested in scientific laboratories, even if historical materialism has attempted to do so, but is constituted as a cognitive endeavour that gravitates around two questions: *"How?"* and *"Why?"*. *"How?"* refers to the reconstruction of certain elements, facts, events, and *"Why?"* to their interpretation. Determining the relationship between *"How?"* and *"Why?"* will result in establishing causal relationships. The *"relationship"* between *"How?"* and *"Why?"* is altered by somehow antagonistic reasons: if the answer to the first question is largely due to the person's capacity to document, make connections, analyse, think critically, the answers to the second question are related to the influences of the social, political, intellectual environment and not only. In this regard, the objective reconstruction of the truth is a desideratum to which we must aspire.

Ukraine: the intersection of the *"area of peace"* and the *"area of war"*

In a reductionist manner, the current international system is a closed one, where the interaction, process and structure reveal an aggregate following the core-periphery model, which has proved sustainable over time. From this point of view, the international system seems divided into two worlds: the first one, the area of peace, is dominated by international political actors that do not consider the use of war to resolve their differences, having interdependent political-economic-social-military relations. It is possible because most of the powerful international political actors belong to this area; the second one, the area of conflict, where sovereignty remains sacred, in a strictly Westphalian logic, and where states still use war as an instrument of politics. In this area, states are dominated by the feeling that it is likely for the tensions between them to escalate and, consequently, they

are preparing for war. It is made possible and even accelerated by the weak degree of interdependencies at all levels.

Throughout history, international systems have had different structures: first, there were imperial or hegemonic control structures, where a single entity dominated the system; then, the bipolar structure emerged, in which two entities dominated the system; last, the balance of power structure, where three or more states controlled the system. It should not be overlooked that the modern state was born in an international context that included a diversity of social units such as city-states, nation-states and empires (Mann, 2017, passim).

Even if, in general, the aim is to anticipate the changes taking place in an international system or, at least, to identify some of their common or complementary elements (changes, A.N.), what can be said about them is that they are closed or open. To clarify this point, we need to go back in time to John Halford Mackinder's geopolitical theory. According to the mentioned theory, geography has a considerable impact on human mobility. Essentially, what Mackinder tells us is that power is bounded by geography. For the British geopolitician, the world is divided into three large regions: a Eurasian *heartland*, around which there is an inner semicircle, and beyond it an outer semicircle. In his view, the *heartland* represents the starting point of universal history, an *"island-world"* that is a closed international system. Geographical obstacles – the Atlantic, the Pacific, the Indian Oceans, the Sahara Desert etc. – make the communication with the *"outside world"* impossible. However, the *"pre-Columbian"* situation changes after 1492, when transoceanic navigation transforms the *"island-world"* from a closed system into an open one. Thus, the powers from the outer semicircle – Great Britain, Japan, the USA – begin to exert pressure on the *heartland*. The *"Columbian"* era lasts until 1900, when expansion comes to an end because of *"no longer existing property claims"* (Mackinder, 1904, p. 421). Thus, the *"post-Columbian"* era *"closes"* the international system again, this time globally. What is important about these types of international systems, with an impact

on international relations even today, is how they operate. While in an open system the shock of major changes can be transferred and dissipated in *"unknown areas"*, in a closed system the changes must either reflect or *"reverberate"* throughout the system (Ib., p. 422). Consequently, the war in Ukraine will reverberate throughout the international system, as a whole, and, implicitly, throughout the international security system.

The Russian Federation view of sovereignty in the context of the war in Ukraine

The Russian Federation has a big problem with understanding the term sovereignty. Stephen D. Krasner, a leading international relations theorist, claims that the term *"sovereignty"* has four meanings: international legal sovereignty (the international recognition of a state within its own borders), Westphalian sovereignty (the exclusion of external interference in the actions of the authorities of a state), internal sovereignty (the ability of authorities to exercise control within their own borders) and interdependent sovereignty (the ability to develop policies regarding the flow of information, people, ideas, goods and threats) (Krasner, 1999, passim). Analysing the domestic and foreign policy of the Russian Federation, we realize that it can partially meet only the first two requirements of sovereignty. Being more nostalgic about the past, the decision-making class cannot understand that Yalta (4-11 February 1945), the Congress of Vienna (1814-1815), the Peace of Westphalia (1648) belong to the past, and that the state must share authority and absolute sovereignty within international organizations. This is how a Russian success story unfolds: no matter how hard one fights for sovereignty, one ends up strengthening the authorities even more. The more power the authorities have, the less sovereignty the country has. Sovereignty does not mean only, or not at all, the display of a nuclear arsenal or the deployment of special forces in theatres of operations; sovereignty means, above all, assiduous efforts to develop a country, integrate it into the international system and make others recognize it. The Russian Federation proves the opposite: an undisciplined political actor at the international level.

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For example, the missile is an essential symbolic element in the Russian mentality. The missile is an object, physically shrouded in mysticism, the graft of the vastness of the territory and, at the same time, the state's response to the challenge represented by this vastness. A symbol of fear and power alike, the missile is the main attribute of the Russian Federation sovereignty. The Russians feel the fear, but they are, at the same time, *"producers"* of fear and capable of exploiting it, turning it into a political-economic-military resource. The way Vladimir Putin has transformed the Russian Federation serves the Hobbesian world, where a *"war of all against all"* has fear as its main resource and security measures as its remedy. Thus, threats are created by the Kremlin, which then offers us the solution at a not negligible price. Missiles are the personification of the state, of the citizen, of the towering pride.

THE *"BINARY"* NATURE OF RUSSIAN THOUGHT

Russian spiritualism as reflection in the foreign and security policy

The principle that defines the profile of Russian thought is related to the idea of the end of the world. The tribulations of each generation have been generated by the search for this end, under the sign of the establishment of the kingdom of justice. Russian spiritualism has an eschatological starting point, an element that helps us to understand, we believe, the Russians dualistic attitude in perceiving the world: everything on the earth belongs to the forces of evil and must end with the transformation of the world in the spirit of Christian truth. Thus, the Russians disinterest in everything that means the material plane of existence and the organization of civil life is explained by the development of the *"awareness of the end"*. Simultaneously, the awareness of the establishment of the Kingdom of God is one of the reasons for the emergence of non-religious forms of the eschatological idea: the tsarist empire or the atheistic communism.

A retrospective look at the history of Russia, under its various names, reveals the existence of a constant internal conflict, which

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leaves its mark on its behaviour until now. At the origin of the events is a creative force that gives birth to a cultural paradigm, an evolution that is suddenly deviated by certain major disruptive events, which give way to other developments, on a larger scale, but not necessarily with a sense of legitimacy. Out of this process resulted: Kievan Russia, of Muscovite absolutism, Imperial and Soviet Russia, with transitory phases of violence, anarchy and voluntarism. The winding historical evolution of Russia is captured by Alexandr Solzhenitsyn in his assessment made at the end of the 20th century: *"Having huge spaces at their disposal, the Russian people experienced a rapid and facile development, but, for the same reason, they did not grow vertically; the ‹hot heads›, the ‹born fault-finders› went to spend their energy becoming Cossacks (while, in Western Europe, people settled in the cities and built the culture). The Russian leaders suffered from the mania of ‹colonization› through an irrepressible dispersion, the vocation of concentration being completely foreign to them"* (Soljenițîn, 1995, p. 59).

Belonging to neither Europe nor Asia, the Russian Federation is an *"enormous Western-Orient"* (Berdiaev, 1969, p. 10). It is the first aspect that polarizes the Slavic soul, feeling embarrassed by everything that could limit it. Nikolai Berdyaev highlights the relationship between the physical and spiritual geography of the Russians: *"The landscape of the Russian soul corresponds with the landscape of Russia, the same boundlessness, formlessness, reaching out into infinity, breadth"* (Ib., p. 29). The geographical landscape has a psychological counterpart. For example, the same Berdyaev says about Europe that *"the strict parcelling of lands, compartmentalized into narrow categories, favoured the emergence of a civilization, determining in a completely different way both the appearance of the landscape and the character of the people. It could therefore be said that the Russian people are victims of the immensity of the homeland"* (Berdiaev, 1994, p. 29). In other words, the autocratic forms of government in Russia are a reflection of its territorial vastness.

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In the case of the Russians, the elementary dimension of spatiality comes with a form of mistrust. It is because, on the one hand, the East has transmitted the teaching about form more like a mirage/illusion, and, on the other hand, the West has placed everything in sustainable forms and categories. Thus, the Russians have felt an insecurity and uncertainty in front of the form, a possible explanation for the repeated failures in establishing and consolidating any democratic forms of statehood. The weakness of the form finds its explanation in the soul of the Russians, in the eschatological and messianic dimension of the soul, the perfect form being the Kingdom of God or the New Jerusalem. Until then, any territorial expansion will be possible and *"legitimate"* for building the *"Citadel of the Future"*.

The obsession with territorial conquests and the failure in establishing a *pax russica*

From the first episodes of expansion, leaders have been obsessed with achieving cohesion and securing borders. Diversity was needed in drafting the statutes for the national and ethnic components of the Empire. Failing, looking through its own lenses, to receive European recognition through the conquests in the West, Russia achieved it through conquests in the East, where it stopped expanding only when it encountered other empires. Its power was based on its European heritage, and its destiny was an Asian one, based on the continuity of Eurasia.

Thinking from the perspective of the size, duration, and maintaining control over the imperial space during a limited period of time, we note that the Russian Empire ranked first in the world history of empires. Another special characteristic of this empire was that, unlike maritime empires, in which the population of the metropolis was separated from that of the colonies, here the cohabitation of the populations was constant and always raised the issue of the relations between the dominant and the dominated, who, living in same space, had to learn from each other despite the differences between them.

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The composition of the empire, including heterogeneous nations and peoples, generated very difficult organizational problems, compared to other empires having possessions on other continents. The core-periphery relations highlighted two antagonistic features: centralization as an organizing guideline and diversity of the state as a practice. All the leaders were tormented by the same question: how can such heterogeneous peoples live in harmony to achieve a *pax russica*? Perhaps, within its Russian limits, the Empire was characterized by a certain degree of maturity governed by orthodoxy, autocracy, national spirit, but could the same principles be applied to non-Russian peoples? The Russian power tried to apply various solutions in order to build a *pax russica*. Throughout that part of the Russian history, it was one constant, which stands out even today, being also the greatest vulnerability: the loyalty of subjects, of all origins, to their rulers and less to the state. That is the reason why the tendencies towards revolts, protests, revolutions are vulnerabilities transformed into sensitivities with historical roots to which the political class is very attentive. It is also one of the explanations, in the Russian view, for the fact that Ukraine, considered part of the empire, must not leave the Russian body. Mention should be made that ensuring a flexibility of the statutes in the colonial space and exercising, in certain areas and in various periods, an indirect authority over it have represented the ruling class great concerns.

The fact that the Russian Federation has not gone through a real process of de-Stalinization – as, for example, Germany went through a process of de-Nazification – makes citizens periodically return to certain sad events and characters in history. They are re-evaluated and this process is nothing more than a testimony of an archaic, pre-national condition of national consciousness.

The Russian culture of violence

The Russian culture of violence is based on two principles: the right of the mighty and the silence of the weak. The fact that the Russian Federation has not gone through a real process of de-Stalinization – as, for example, Germany went through a process of de-Nazification – makes citizens periodically return to certain sad events and characters in history. They are re-evaluated and this process is nothing more than a testimony of an archaic, pre-national condition of national consciousness. Not being accustomed to freedom, after receiving it in 1991 and *"enjoying"* it for a while, the people returned it to the state, which has used it precisely to exercise coercion on the people.

The binary, black or white, nature of Russian thought will inevitably lead to polarization and clashes. The country is characterized, at all levels, by resentments, grafted on the search for external alibis. The person or the state responsible for own failures, in other words *"the enemy"*, is the result of resentment, an extension of the ingrained inferiority complex. The enemies bear the blame for the failures of the Russian Federation. Ukraine has become the *"fascist enemy"* – *"fascism"* being the universal characteristic of *"the other"* -, accused of treason and backed by the West, with its theory of *Dolchstoss im Rücken* (*"stabbing in the back"*). Thus, a new *"Russian identity"* is being built, revived on the ideological foundation of the victory against Nazism. Nothing more fake!

Schizophrenia is also a characteristic of Russian thought. Shame mixed with pride, love mixed with hate give rise to a binary nature of Russian thought, painting a black or white picture of the world: *"Who is not with us is against us"*, the Russians against everyone.

The particular interpretation of geopolitics

In the Russian Federation, geopolitics has become a kind of queen of sciences, on which the ruling class has left its mark by inserting messianic myths and clichés such as *"the struggle for resources", "motherland", "national interest"*. Geopolitics has been diverted from its fundamental theories and principles and turned into a tool to justify the fears of the political class, thus becoming a *"fake science"*. The leader of this process is Aleksandr Dughin. It can be seen in the war in Ukraine, where the fear of strategic encirclement, if Ukraine were to join the EU or NATO, without a serious analysis of the risks and threats, as well as of the advantages, has pushed the Russian Federation into a trap. Moscow has turned its fears into self-fulfilling prophecies, in the opposite sense. It *"succeeded"* in uprooting and pushing (following the idea of *"invader by birth right"*) a people, until recently fraternal, in the arms of the West. It is also because Moscow has mistakenly evaluated its geopolitical interests.

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UKRAINE: OBJECTIVE OF RUSSIAN *"RE-IMPERIALIZATION"*

The *"Socium"* of E.F. Morozov

Seen as a social phenomenon, war must be analysed as a function of the state policy and the society policy, exactly as polemology suggests, only if the society policy is linked to the state policy. The state-society relationship is complicated, the state being an emanation of the society and the society carrying out its policy through the state. Following the logic, it can be affirmed, to some extent, that the state was created by society to be able to wage wars. That is the reason why the definition given by Clausewitz, namely that *"war is a continuation of politics by other means"*, is defining when we try to understand what war is. Assuming, however, that the state was not created, first of all, so that the society could wage wars, it has also acquired this function. In this way, the society opened the path for the state to emancipate itself from it, becoming a mechanism of coercion.

The fact that states have often reached the conclusion of partial demilitarization has come into contradiction with societal militarization, responsible for the scale of partisan/rebellious/insurgent actions, which often come into conflict with own states when sovereignty is weakened or disappears as such. Even if the war impulse is removed from the state level, *"it moves to certain preferred layers and sectors of the socium"*, a term used by E.F. Morozov in the foreword to the book by E.E. Messner, *"Mutiny, or the name of the Third World War"*. Morozov tells us that *"(...) the socium responds by increasing the level of military activity at the social level"* (Messner, 2015, p. 9).

Partisans/rebels/insurgents benefit from the *"depersonalization"* of the state, taking advantage of the *"crowd"*/society, moving in and out of it, forcing the state to please them. In the *"future warfare"* the emphasis will no longer be on the conquest of territory, but of souls. Thus, the partisans/rebels/insurgents will turn into *"citizen-soldiers"*, who will not obey any military rule, like ordinary soldiers, but will act in a permissive civil discipline, which will unite them, and the fight

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will go on for the conquest of souls. The *"citizen-soldier"* will not stand in the front as at the liturgy. Iron discipline, tireless energy, courage, bravery, duty to country, hardships, privations, danger will depend on the changing state of mind of the *"citizen-soldier"*, unchecked by self-discipline or imposed discipline, for the *"future warfare"* will not be governed by the laws of classical warfare.

It is one of the ingredients used by the Russians in the war in Ukraine.

The partisans/rebels/insurgents are psychologically linked to the people they belong to, *"taking from their soul disposition the strategic directives: to attack, to retreat, to resist in battle, to fight without resisting"* (Ib., p. 73). The strategy of the *"future warfare"* will be to take, from a psychological point of view, *"prisoner"* the enemy people, by inducing doubt and confusion, with the aim of convincing them of the victory of the aggressor's ideas and making them adhere to them. Disinformation, manipulation, propaganda, subversion, persuasion play an important role in this whole process. For example, the Russian ruling elite used the psychological effects of some ideas, based on Pavlov's experiments on *"conditioned reflexes"*, to *"train"* the people. It explains the states of ecstasy of the citizens when they heard slogans about *"the greatness and genius of the leader"* or *"the construction of socialism"*.

Vladimir Putin's *"compatriots"*

When we talk about *"compatriots"*, we must refer to the concept of the Russian nation. Thus, five concepts of what the Russian nation means have been identified in the Russian public space: the first concept highlights the identity of the union, recalling an older idea in which the Russians have the mission of creating and maintaining a multinational state with the role of *"teacher of other peoples"*; the second concept refers to the Russian nation, which includes the entire community of Eastern Slavs (Russians, Ukrainians, Belarusians), who speak the same language, share the same religion and culture; the third concept is an integrative one having as core all the Russian language

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speakers, as the first language spoken, regardless of ethnicity, including parts of Moldova, Ukraine, the countries of the Caucasus, Kazakhstan etc.; the fourth concept refers strictly to race, only those with Russian blood being included here; the fifth concept has a civic aspect and includes all citizens of the Russian Federation (Tolz, 2001, pp. 235-260). The Russian Federation had a vision that was totally opposite to that of Israel regarding the issue of *"compatriots"*, in the sense that the latter marched towards helping them to settle and develop where they were, outside the country's borders, developing policies that would not disadvantage them in relation to the native populations, while enjoying the same rights and freedoms. Time has shown that the Russian Federation has turned *"compatriots"* into *primus inter pares* among native populations. It was Boris Yeltsin who, through the policies promoted to help the *"compatriots"*, sowed the seeds of the policies developed by Vladimir Putin to transform them into a vehicle through which Moscow's influence is exercised in former Soviet republics. It should be mentioned that the Russian Federation has never wanted to turn *"compatriots"* into repatriates. It has rather been a policy thought out and developed in the sense of exercising Russian influence abroad. Also, through non-coercive measures, Moscow has provided its foreign policy with a *"humanitarian"* aspect.

The premise of some analyses related to the fact that the Russian Federation would have an inherent natural right to privileged interests in some states – which were part of the defunct Russian Empire and, later, the USSR – is totally wrong. Realist or constructivist theoretical approaches to international relations promote the idea of the great power status of the Russian Federation in its region, its aggressive policies being a reaction to the disregard of Moscow's interests by NATO and the EU. These approaches, emanating from the analysts in the service of the Kremlin and from the Western ones alike, start from the wrong idea of a disagreement, also a source of conflict, between the interests of the Russian Federation and those of the West in the former Soviet space, with an emphasis on affecting the Russian Federation interests in that area, with both camps considering former

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Soviet Socialist Republics as passive actors. The mentioned disregard ignores, sometimes even denies, the views and security interests of those states in the region. The Kremlin's non-coercive policies turned into *hard power* actions when some states in its area of influence, considered its own, dared to discuss joining NATO or the EU.

„Re-imperialization": vehicle for the Russian Federation war in Ukraine

Re-imperialization means the resuscitation or reconstitution of an empire (Motyl, 2001, p. 5). According to other sources, an empire is defined as *"a relationship, official or unofficial, in which one state controls the effective political sovereignty of another political society. This control can be acquired through force, political cooperation, economic, social or cultural dependence"* (Doyle, 1986, p. 45). For Motyl, an empire is *"a hierarchically organized political system, having a radial structure – like a spoked wheel –, within which an elite and a central state dominate peripheral elites and societies, acting as intermediaries in their main interactions and channelling the flows of resources from the periphery to the centre and back to the periphery"* (Motyl, ib., p. 4).

The Russian Federation considers itself a national state rather than a civic one, and the desire for re-imperialization gets clear from Vladimir Putin's speech on 18 March 2014, after the annexation of Crimea: *"millions of people went to sleep in a country to wake up in another, overnight becoming ethnic minorities in the former republics of the Union, while the Russian people has become one of the largest, if not the largest ethnic group in the world separated by borders"* (Putin, 2004). Also, Dmitri Medvedev, President of the Russian Federation at that time, declared after the Russo-Georgian war, that *"(...) as in the case of other countries, there are some regions where Russia has privileged interests"* (Friedman, 2008).

Motyl observes that *"Retaining their importance as historical reality, conceptual category and analytical tool, empires refuse to disappear"* (Motyl, ib., p. 3). In the case of the Russian Federation, compatriots become a pretext and an engine for transmitting

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the ideology manufactured by the Kremlin to unify the populations remaining outside the borders.

The vehicle of the re-imperialization of the Russian Federation is the population of the defunct USSR remaining outside the country's borders, and here we do not mean only ethnic Russians/Russian diaspora/Russian minority, but also Russophiles, Russophones (Russian speakers), nostalgic people, agents of influence etc., in short *"compatriots"*, who consider themselves part of *Russki Mir*. It is the strategic function of ethno-re-imperialization. The withdrawal of the USSR's imperial structure left behind, among other things, the *"imperial"* citizens, now minorities in the states that emerged after the collapse of communism, a social category dedicated to the metropolis, contemptuous of the natives, characterized by superiority and arrogance. The *"compatriots"* are a resentful population, who live in a different reality, the one imposed and promoted by Moscow, and refuse to obey and adapt to the laws and norms of social coexistence in the newly emerged states. The *"compatriots"* must be reintroduced, it can be also understood as used, in/by *Russki Mir*. This is the Kremlin's thesis as well as alibi. It is where the explanations for Moscow's retaliatory actions must be sought. The thesis was stated as early as 1992, by Sergey Karaganov, then becoming the *"Karaganov doctrine"*, by which the author stated that the Russian Federation should assume a proactive policy, as a former imperial power, and offer the citizens from outside the borders, distributed in the role of *"compatriots"* protection and support. The Kremlin's problem is that these *"compatriots"* are no longer just a mass for manoeuvre at Vladimir Putin's disposal, as they have learned to distinguish what is best for them. For their part, the *"compatriots"* would prefer a negotiation of the status up to the point of being used as instruments for putting into practice some sophisticated matters, such as frozen conflicts. Thus, the enlargement of entities such as NATO and the EU to their eastern border is hampered by the unresolved issues related to the relativization of the borders of some countries bordering the border. In the dispute between the West (NATO, EU) and the Russian Federation, the major difference is that

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the former is incomparably stronger, but less motivated, while the latter is weaker, but more motivated.

Agnia Grigas identifies seven steps in the *"re-imperialization"* policy: 1) non-coercive measures; 2) humanitarian policies; 3) actual policies regarding compatriots; 4) passporting; 5) information warfare; 6) protective measures; 7) informal control or official annexation of territories inhabited by *"compatriots"* (Grigas, 2022, passim).

For example, Ukraine did not know *"What it is"* for a long time. To clarify, over Ukraine came the war started by the Russian Federation, and a major role was also played by the elites, who drifted, sometimes with the East, sometimes with the West. In these two countries, it is not the *"compatriots"* that are strong, but it is the state that is weak. The country's failure after the collapse of the USSR is the failure in assuming identity.

Of course, an analysis should be conducted regarding the idea of whether the Russian Federation wants to re-imperialize or just limit former Soviet republics in terms of their foreign policy, especially in relation to them joining NATO and the EU, the latter variant also guaranteeing *"good neighbourly relations"* (Menkiszak, 2014, p. 4). In any case, the Kremlin is trying to create an alternative order in the post-Soviet space, especially by creating the Eurasian Economic Union. The motivation of re-imperialization policies is to ensure the security of the country.

The Russian Federation considers that it has an inalienable right to its own sphere of influence. Re-imperialization is a matter of *soft power*. Taking into account the stages proposed by Agnia Grigas, non-coercive measures come in support of diplomacy and have the role of increasing the ability of the Russian state to exercise its influence based on its policies, culture and values, perceived as legitimate (Nye Jr., 2004, pp. 11-15). The question that legitimately arises is whether the Russian Federation employs *soft power* methods. The answer penned by one of the experts in the field is that Moscow demonstrates its influence through *"hard diplomacy"* and *"soft coercion"* (Sherr, 2013, p. 2).

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CONCLUSIONS

The ups and downs of Vladimir Putin's popularity in the polls in the Russian Federation have led to changes in the terms of the social contract between him and society. Even if one of the *"secrets"* of Putinism consists in the ability to conquer each redoubt, one by one, leaving the impression on the civil society that everything is a *"personal business"*, so that, when it is completed, it will be too late for an effective resistance, through the war launched against Ukraine, Vladimir Putin is only accelerating the process of intellectual, political and institutional decay of the Russian Federation.

Starting from the premise that the purpose of diplomacy is to avoid war, in the case of the Russian Federation, it is exactly the opposite: it uses war to obtain diplomatic results. In this regard, the three scenarios of the war in Ukraine would be: *most likely* – war of attrition, of long duration, with intermittent freezing phases, in which the Ukrainians will continue to resist, there will be millions of refugees, and the Russian Federation will have to spend enormous sums to support the war effort, which will lead to the collapse of the national economy, with the specification that, in the event that Moscow does not achieve any more notable victories, Vladimir Putin's regime may shatter; *worst case* – the war in Ukraine could evolve favourably for the Russian Federation, in the sense that all of Ukraine will be conquered. From an ethno-political point of view, the Russians have long been an empire capable of *"hosting"* various nations and making them serve their interests; *best case scenario* – the cessation of hostilities, the signing of a Peace Agreement, the withdrawal of Russian troops, all of which being possible only in the event of Vladimir Putin's resignation or replacement, through a coup d'état or revolution. The regime created by Vladimir Putin cannot survive a defeat.

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ROMANIAN MILITARY THINKING

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THE STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE
OF THE DANUBE IN THE CONTEXT
OF A FUTURE ROMANIAN MARITIME
SECURITY STRATEGY FOR THE BLACK SEA

Colonel (N) Lucian GRIGORESCU

Chief of the Romanian Military Representation of Defence Staff
to Allied Command Transformation, Norfolk, Virginia, USA

The present article pleads for the development of a Romanian security strategy that should take into account the importance of the Danube and of the Black Sea for the security of the region. It is mainly a descriptive type of research, aiming to identify subject-related characteristics and categories, based on the study of real data and observation. Moreover, the article highlights the fact that the development of a Black Sea strategy to include the Danube River and the Delta has been a constant concern for Romanian decision-makers for a long time. In addition, it is shown that, in the current context, such a strategy could be integrated into any Black Sea strategy developed in NATO or the EU, guiding the future integrated modernization of the Romanian Naval Forces.

Keywords: Danube Commission; Black Sea; maritime strategy; Romanian Naval Forces; Russia-Ukraine conflict;

INTRODUCTION

Today, the Danube is one of the main rivers of Europe, not only because of its length but especially because of its transport capacities. It crosses the continent from west to east, through regions of a great diversity in terms of natural and economic conditions. Through its course, the Danube traces a *"diagonal"* of Europe, and through the connections it provides between the countries of the continent, it can be considered *"an artery"* of commercial traffic. Thus the *"Old River"* is of great economic importance for most of the countries in its watershed, a fact highlighted by the macro-regional strategy adopted by the European Commission in December 2010 and endorsed by the European Council in 2011. Seeking to create synergies and coordination between existing policies and initiatives in the region, the EU Strategy for the Danube Region/EUSDR was jointly developed by the Commission, together with the Danube Region countries and stakeholders, in order to address common challenges together. (EUSDR, 2011).

In this context, Romania's considerable dependence on the Black Sea and the Danube requires securing the fluvial-maritime communications. If security on river-sea communication routes is ensured *sine die* in peacetime, even more, it becomes vital in crisis or conflict situations. The Danube and its branches have a strong geopolitical and geostrategic significance; therefore, the Danube region, in addition to its advantages, presents obvious risks and it must be properly defended.

The present article pleads for the development of a Romanian security strategy that should take into account the importance of the Danube and of the Black Sea for the security of the region. It is mainly a descriptive type of research, aiming to identify subject-related characteristics and categories, based on the study of real data and observation. Moreover, the article highlights the fact that the development of a Black Sea strategy, to include the Danube River and the Delta has been a constant concern for Romanian decision-makers

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GEOGRAPHICAL RELEVANCE OF THE DANUBE

The Danube, the second largest river in Europe, has always been an economic and cultural catalyst, an axis of prosperity in time and space for the states that established and developed throughout history on its banks, Romania being one of them.

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Forming the northern border of the Roman Empire for a long time and being used as a line of defence as well as for transportation, the Danube River crosses the territory of 10 countries, including seven EU and six NATO member states, being the most international river in the world. With its length of 2,857 km, of which 2,588 km are navigable (between Ulm and Sulina), and a multiannual average flow of 6,855 m³/s, the Danube is ranked 21st among the rivers of the planet.

The Danube River Basin has an area of 805,500 km² and consists of 120 (34 navigable) tributaries. The hydrographic area of the Danube basin represents 8.35% of the surface of the European continent, as the river crosses the territories of Germany, Austria, Slovakia, Hungary, Croatia, Serbia, Bulgaria, Moldova, Ukraine, Romania and four capitals – Vienna, Bratislava, Budapest and Belgrade (*Encyclopaedia Britannica*).

Conventionally, the Danube is formed by the union of two small mountain rivers – the Breg and the Brigach. The course of the river initially goes to the northeast, towards Ulm and Regensburg, after which it turns to the southeast, to enter Austria at Passau. It then continues its course to the southeast through Upper and Lower Austria, crossing Linz and Vienna. Between Bratislava and Szob, it forms the border between Slovakia and Hungary. At Szob, the Danube heads south and runs through the great Alfold plain in central Hungary, crossing Budapest. After forming almost two-thirds of the border between Croatia and Serbia, it enters Serbia, crosses Belgrade, turns to the southeast, then to the east, and enters the territory of Romania (Ib.)

A hydrographic basin as vast as that of the Danube requires its separation into three distinct sectors: an upper sector, with a pronounced alpine character; a middle sector, remarkable for the widest plain of Central Europe; a lower sector, where the river collects the waters from the slopes of the Carpathians and the Balkans.

The Danube is very significant for Romania, since the country is located almost entirely within the river basin. The Romanian sector covers almost a third of the surface area of the basin, and over a third of the river's length flows through the country, representing its southern border. Crucially, the Romanian (and also Ukrainian) Danube is the end carrier of all wastewater discharges into the Black Sea (ICDPR, *Danube Facts and Figures*, online). The Romanian sector includes the course of the river from Moldova Veche to the Danube Delta and the Black Sea, the branches of the Danube from Balta Ialomiţei and Balta Mare a Brăilei (approximately 300 km, depending on the water level), the branches of the Danube and the navigable canals in the delta (about 700 km, depending on the water level) and the Danube-Black Sea Canal with Poarta Albă-Midia branch (91 km).

The waters of the Danube are used for producing electricity, for irrigation systems, for supplying drinking and industrial water to the port cities. The waters provide a rich fishery and a remarkable economic potential, the transportation of goods being the dominant one. Considering the importance of the river for the riparian states, Romania included, the Council of the European Union adopted, in 2011, the EU Strategy for the Danube Region, inviting the National Contact Points and the Priority Area Coordinators, in close cooperation with the Commission and with due involvement of participating third countries, to identify stakeholders to develop projects for the area development and preservation (Council of the EU, *EU Strategy for the Danube Region*, Brussels, 2011, pp. 2-3).

Moreover, taking into account the economic value of the Danube region, which includes 14 countries where more than 100 million people, namely one-fifth of the EU population, live, especially in terms of freight transport, the potential for the riparian countries interconnection has been the subject of different European strategies. Among them, we can mention those focused on the European transport corridors, the Rhine-Main-Danube representing a transcontinental axis *(figure 1)*.

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Figure 1: Rhine-Main-Danube transcontinental axis
(Rechnitzer, 2009, p. 11, in Săgeată, 2012).

Legend
1. Navigable rivers
2. Navigable canals:
    A. Danube-Main-Rhine Canal
    B. Danube-Black Sea Canal
3. Other rivers/shores
4. Cities
5. Capital Cities.

THE DANUBE AS A NATURAL ELEMENT OF HISTORICAL AND STRATEGIC INFLUENCE

The Danube is a vital stake for the states of Central and Eastern Europe, whose history has been closely linked to the political destiny of this river. Moreover, it has been the main area of contact between the great powers. Therefore, the Danube River Basin has a rich history with a strong cultural heritage, a fact proved even by the large number of ethnic groups and the languages still spoken, appreciated as at least 17 official languages (ICDPR, 2004, p. 27.).

For the Romanians, the Danube has been a border, separating Balkan Europe from Central-Eastern Europe as well as a communication channel between riparian states. In this context, free navigation at the mouths of the Danube has been a great concern for the naval powers in the region and beyond, making Romania particularly attractive in this respect, especially considering the proximity to Russia and its relations with Turkey throughout history.

The Great Powers interests in controlling the mouths of the Danube are unequivocally demonstrated by the establishment of the European Commission of the Danube/ECD, an aspect discussed during the Paris Conference of 1856, in order to mediate the possible conflicts of interests between the powers of the time. Subsequently, non-riparian states, such as France and Great Britain, called themselves guarantors of Europe's interests in the Danube. To emphasise the importance of the commission, Grigore Gafencu[1] states that: *"one of the reasons to be of the European Commission* (of the Danube, A.N.) *has always been to serve as a stop to prevent Russian ambitions from having an open path on the Danube right to the centre of Europe"* (Tuluș, 2007). Although it was meant to be a provisional institution aimed at removing the obstacles that hindered navigation along the Maritime Danube, it managed to survive and gradually extended its reach, being thus a successful experiment in international administration, having a self-governing bureaucracy and complete financial independence (Krehbiel, 1918).

Following the Danube Convention, concluded in Paris in 1921, it was decided that the European Commission of the Danube, formed by four states – Great Britain, France, Italy, and Romania, would retain the powers which it possessed before the war (Convention, 1921, Article 5). In 1938, after the Sinaia Agreement[2], Romania's sovereignty over the Maritime Danube was recognized by Great Britain and France, but on 12 September 1940, following the Danube Conference in Vienna, Germany's total control over the Danube was recorded.

After the Second World War, during the Belgrade Conference of 1948, dominated by the Soviet Union, it managed to impose decisions

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[1] Romanian diplomat, Foreign Minister of Romania between 1939-1940.
[2] The Sinaia Agreement was concluded on 18 August 1938 between Romania, France and the United Kingdom. It entered into force on 13 May 1939, ending the Commission's authority over the Lower Danube. It continued to exist, having only an advisory role.

leading to the cancellation of the 1921 convention, the exclusion of Western countries from the Danube Commission, and the abolition of *"free zones"*. (*Convention regarding the Regime of Navigation on the Danube*, Belgrade, 1948). The 1948 Danube Convention was drafted in Moscow and accepted without change by the communist governments of the Danube signatory states – Soviet Union, Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania, the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia. Thus, after almost a century of *"Western order"*, using the idea of establishing the sovereignty of the riverside, the Soviet Union implemented its expansionist tendencies. The three Western Powers – the USA, the UK and France had no influence on Conference decisions. Because of the evolution of the negotiations in Belgrade, the Western powers did not sign the new convention (Campbell, 1949, pp. 315-320).

The end of the Cold War, the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the new geopolitical expansion of Russia, as well as the political-military developments in the Black Sea area has put the importance of the Danube back on the agenda. In this context, it should be highlighted once more the strategic importance of the Danube and its mouths in connection to the Black Sea, the Adriatic Sea and the Mediterranean Sea, through the Bosporus and the Dardanelles straits, and thus to the free access to the high seas of the planet and the world trade. It is a problem that has long been considered by historians, diplomats, politicians and strategists.

Today, the Danube Commission/DC is based in Budapest. It ensures, on the basis of appropriate forms of partnership and cooperation, freedom of navigation on the entire river, without discrimination between riparian countries and other states. (danubecommission.org).

THE ECONOMIC AND STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE OF THE DANUBE TODAY

The most important economic dimension of the Danube remains, without a doubt, the shipping sector. From an economic point of view, the Danube represents a huge cheap and fast transport infrastructure related to the quantities carried by the transport units, connected to the railway and road network that intersects with the river. The economic analysis of river traffic on the Danube shows a total capacity of 80 million tons per year. Under the conditions of the RO-RO

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type naval traffic and the internodal switching to road and rail traffic, the transport capacity on this river can increase by another 10 million tons per year. Thus, the Danube can be considered the *"backbone"* of the communication system in South-Eastern Europe.

The construction of the Rhine-Main-Danube Canal, put into use in 1992, allowed the union of the two major European inland communication routes, the Rhine and the Danube. Thus, the Pan-European Corridor VII *(figure 2)*, the only water transport corridor

Figure 2: Map of the ten Pan-European transport corridors
(https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pan-European_corridors, retrieved on 17 March 2023)

out of the 10 existing in Europe, links the North Sea with the Black Sea and has the Danube as its main connecting element. Under these conditions, it has been possible to connect the two major European ports (Rotterdam, on the North Sea, and Constanţa, on the Black Sea), ensuring a safe and cheap communication route that crosses all of Europe over a length of 3,540 km. Due to the multitude of ports located on the Rhine river, on the Rhine-Main-Danube Canal, as well as on the Danube (there are 47 river ports located along the Danube river, four river-sea ports, and five ports on the Danube-Black Sea Canal), a particular fluency of goods traffic can be ensured for any area of Europe, all the more so as through the system of Western European canals the transport of goods to the countries of Western and Northern Europe can be ensured.

Romania is the country on whose territory the largest part of the Danube flows (approximately 38% of the vast basin). Moreover, it hosts both the mouths of the river and the canal that connects the river to the port of Constanţa. Therefore, it has had a special interest in using this main way of communication, as a means of carrying out the transport of goods both for domestic traffic and for international export or transit traffic. This fact determines an obvious advantage as well as a major responsibility that must be honoured through a correct geopolitical and geostrategic evaluation of this element.

The Rhine-Main-Danube Canal allows countries from Central Europe to have direct access to the Black Sea and from there to the Suez Canal. Thus, a new trade route has emerged, linking the Suez Canal and Central Europe via Constanţa, which, compared to the old one (crossing the entire Mediterranean Sea and bypassing the Iberian Peninsula), has the advantage of shortening the journey by eight days, including the related costs. Another advantage is the fact that the ports of the Black Sea and those of the Eastern Mediterranean Sea have the most favourable position to the Suez Canal for the routes of the Indian Ocean and the Far East. With the establishment of the river axis Rotterdam-Constanţa, new geopolitical values are propelled to the fore and give Romania a new image for Europe.

The importance of this route is overwhelming both from an economic point of view (it has been proved that it is extremely efficient and produces advantages for all the countries that use it) and especially

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from a geostrategic point of view, where a series of vulnerabilities, if they are not evaluated and managed correctly, can have particularly serious consequences. The main vulnerabilities are related to ensuring the full viability of the route and terrorist threats.

In the context of ensuring the full viability of the route, and especially of the Danube section, it is worth mentioning that it depends on the actions of the riparian countries. The positioning of one or more states in a state of conflict can generate quite serious consequences. An example in this regard, in the recent history, is the situation in former Yugoslavia, when the bombing of the three bridges in Novi Sad blocked for a while not only the transport on the corridor VII but also the one on the Pan-European corridor X. Therefore, to prevent such events, it would be important for all the countries bordering the Danube to be part of a common alliance, both economic and political (Hâldan, 2014, p. 2).

As for terrorist threats, they can affect both the traffic on the Danube and the safety of the population settled on the banks of the river. At any time, especially in its lower course, the Danube can be the object of terrorist actions, to stop navigation on this important European artery or produce floods with catastrophic effects. The Danube-the Black Sea Canal, the Iron Gates energy systems (the largest on the Danube), the Kozloduy and Cernavodă nuclear power plants, and especially the permanent crossings, roads and railway bridges may be attacked by terrorists. In this regard, it is important to note that not all the countries bordering the Danube have naval forces specialized in the fight against possible terrorist actions, and even cyber attacks, most of them being limited to police or border police vessels with limited capabilities, especially in combating cross-border crime and pollution (Hanganu, 2006).

In terms of specialized forces, we can mention that there are no such units in Germany, Austria, Slovakia, Croatia or Moldova. Hungary has 5 fast sweeping boats and 3 US SOC-R/Special Operations Craft Riverine, Serbia has a small Flotilla/HQ ship, sweeping and fast patrol boats. Romania is the only country that has a fluvial Naval Force, consisting of 3 monitors, 5 armoured gunboats, and 12 minesweeper boats (navy.ro), practically being the strongest fluvial naval force on the Danube that is supplemented by the boats of the border police,

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From a geostrategic point of view, Romania is located at the crossroads of the world's major geographical areas, as well as of major European and even Asian interests. The area of responsibility in Romania, considering its geographic position, is directly influenced, both operationally and strategically, by the Danube River and the Black Sea, a fact that requires particular and even vital attention.

It can be observed that Romania and the area where it is located are gradually moving from the status of *"periphery"* to that of *"centre"*, depending on the expansion of the North Atlantic Alliance and the European Union. Romania, as a country of contact between the Euro-Atlantic and the Asian space, benefits from the intersection of some important geopolitical and geostrategic axes, as follows: the **NW-SE axis**, represented by the Rhine-Main-Danube Canal, an important axis of Europe; the **N-S axis**, which can ensure access from the Scandinavian and the Baltic Sea areas to the Black Sea, by road or river; the **E-W axis**, which allows the countries of the Caucasus to have air and maritime access to Europe, through the Black Sea, thus Constanța becoming a gateway to Central and Western Europe, or, through trans-shipment, to the other ports on the seas and oceans of the world (a segment of the famous old *"silk road"*); the **SE-NW axis**, which is of interest to Türkiye, as well as to the other countries in the area (Syria, Iran, Iraq), considering the access facilities through the *"Romanian gate"* to the European space, using the road, rail, maritime, fluvial formula or the combined RO-RO transport type; the **Far East-Eastern Europe axis**, which turns the *"Romanian gate"* into Japan's fourth gateway to Europe (after Rotterdam, Hamburg and Trieste); the **NE-SW axis**, which mainly ensures Russia's and Ukraine's access to the port of Constanța, the most important in the Black Sea; the **Caspian Sea-Black Sea-Mediterranean Sea axis**, which can have the potential of a multiplier of dialogue and cooperation on multiple levels (Marinescu, 2009).

All the mentioned axes, even if some are less marked at the moment, intersect the Danube and the Romanian coast, namely the mouths of the Danube and the Black Sea. Therefore, keeping the status of master of the Danube mouths is fundamental for the development of Romania as well as for the preservation of its national security.

SUPPORT FOR UKRAINIAN GRAIN SHIPMENTS ON THE DANUBE BY THE ROMANIAN NAVAL FORCES

Following the outbreak of the conflict in Ukraine, with all its consequences, the Secretariat of the Danube Commission, based in Budapest, actively contributes to the initiative of the European Union regarding the establishment of the Solidarity Lanes to ensure the continuity of trade, and, importantly, the export of agricultural products from Ukraine. To this end, the Danube Commission Secretariat has established and operated an information and coordination desk, supporting the set-up of new logistics chains via the Danube ports of the region (danubecommission.org).

The Russia-Ukraine conflict and the Russian naval blockade of Ukrainian Black Sea ports have significantly disrupted Ukrainian grain shipments to Europe, Africa and the Middle East. Ukraine is the fourth largest grain exporter in the world having more than 25 million tons stored for export. Before the war, the Ukrainian ports on the Black Sea – Odessa, Pivdennyi, Mykolayiv, and Chornomorsk – served as terminals for about 5 million tons per month, which was 80% of the total grain exported monthly. The remaining 20% were exported by rail or road (Păvălașc, 2022).

The destruction of the port infrastructures, the danger of mines in the Black Sea and the hostile actions of the Russian military ships have led the Ukrainian government to find other solutions for the export of grain. If road transport is limited by transport capacities and extremely high costs, and railway transport involves changing the gauge railway, which is different in the European Union compared to the Ukrainian one (Romania changed the gauge from the border with the Republic of Moldova to the port of Galați, an old line over a distance of about 5 km), the only way of transport with lower costs is the transport on the Danube to Constanța and from there by sea to Europe and Africa, or Austria and Germany. It would allow the export of approximately 2 million tons per month. In this regard, Romania has made available the port of Constanța and the ports of Galați and Brăila for the transport of Ukrainian grain. But like any infrastructure, ports cannot suddenly go from a normal level of activity to a much higher one, requiring additional staff or storage facilities, aspects that need time and investments. Moreover, no operator would be interested in investing in infrastructure that can become redundant with the end of the war.

In addition, transport on the Danube can ensure the movement of grain to Austria and Germany, and from there to Africa and the Middle East. It entails a significant bypass and implicitly additional costs for the relatively small quantities of grain that can be transported upstream. It does not mean, however, that the option of transport on the Danube should be avoided, but it needs the review by the EU of the strategy for the Danube region, with a special emphasis on dredging works, to allow the navigation of commercial ships even in dry periods. Even if the Danube is a less advantageous option than it seems at first glance, the most sustainable way to bring enough grain to the countries that urgently need it is to resume transport via the Black Sea, thus river transport playing an extremely important role, which can be capitalized on in the future.

It is obvious that the Russia-Ukraine war has entered a phase of attrition, and the conclusion of an armistice or even a fragile peace is still far away. This aspect, coupled with the sanctions imposed on the Russian Federation, will further amplify the grain crisis, especially for African and Asian countries. Ukraine has lagged behind in exporting the grain harvested, which cannot be stored for a long period of time.

The Romanian Naval Forces can support the transport on the river with the personnel and means at its disposal. Thus, by qualifying personnel in the Danube navigation, following a minimum training course, the number of pilots in the Romanian sector of the Danube can be supplemented. Military river tugs can carry in their current configuration one barge loaded with grain, and by modifying and adapting the bow of the ships, as well as by increasing the propulsion power, they can carry up to four barges of grain. Another support that the Romanian Naval Forces can provide on the entire Romanian sector of the Danube is the logistics support as river ships can operate both on the river-sea sector and upstream.

THE ESSENTIAL ROLE OF THE DANUBE AND ITS INCREASED IMPORTANCE IN THE CURRENT GEOPOLITICAL CONTEXT

The current regional geopolitical context is strongly marked by the Russia-Ukraine conflict that began on 24 February 2022, through the aggression of the Russian Federation, and expanded from the two separatist regions in eastern Ukraine (Donetsk and Luhansk)

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to the entire Ukrainian territory. In this context, the Russian forces hit military and civilian targets located in the city of Ivano-Frankivsk, just 124 km north of the Romanian-Ukrainian border, as well as in the port city of Odessa, 207 km away from Tulcea. Moreover, the Snake/Serpents Island, located only 45 km from the Romanian shore of the Black Sea and the mouths of the Danube, was occupied for about three months by the Russian forces, which means that Moscow had and still has as objective to control the access to the Black Sea and implicitly to oversee NATO's Eastern Flank.

The *"special military operation for the demilitarization and denazification of Ukraine"* as Vladimir Putin called the invasion of Ukraine, has led to the blockade of the northern part of the Black Sea and the transformation of the Azov Sea into a *"Russian lake"*. Moreover, the navigation lines between the south and the north of the Black Sea have been redrawn, because of both the conflict and the danger of mines, as well as because of the embargo imposed on Russia. Under such conditions, the Black Sea port of Constanța has become much more important in terms of naval traffic. Considering the limited port infrastructure, it has to adapt to the situation, which requires investment as well as increased workload.

The tense situation in the north of the Black Sea has had inevitable consequences for the Danube River too. In this regard, we can mention that, in the first weeks of the Russian invasion, the Isaccea-Orlovka Romanian-Ukrainian border crossing point was stormed by Ukrainian residents fleeing in terror from the war. In addition to the Ukrainian river ferry, which doubled its number of transit passengers, the number of private boats that made routes between the Ukrainian and Romanian shores also increased (Atanasiu, 2022).

The commercial traffic has increased considerably and far exceeded the commercial possibilities of the river ports in both Ukrainian and Romanian sectors. The severe drought in 2022-2023 (which led to the lowest levels of the Danube in the last 30 years) and the lack of specialized river navigation personnel resulted in blockades of the Sulina branch by a lot of river vessels. Moreover, if upstream of Galați the Danube offers a pillar of stability, considering the riparian countries in its upper and middle basin membership of Euro-Atlantic organizations (Serbia being the only country that is part of neither NATO nor the EU), downstream of Galați, up to Ceatal Ismail and the entire Chilia branch,

The "special military operation for the demilitarization and denazification of Ukraine" as Vladimir Putin called the invasion of Ukraine, has led to the blockade of the northern part of the Black Sea and the transformation of the Azov Sea into a "Russian lake". Moreover, the navigation lines between the south and the north of the Black Sea have been redrawn, because of both the conflict and the danger of mines, as well as because of the embargo imposed on Russia. Under such conditions, the Black Sea port of Constanța has become much more important in terms of naval traffic.

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the Danube sector tends to become an axis of instability against the background of the Kremlin's tendencies to change the borders by the force of arms and to regain control over the mouths of the river.

In this context, one of the scenarios of the Russia-Ukraine conflict aims at the Russian Federation conquering the entire southern part of Ukraine bordering the Black Sea and, in this way, making the junction between the separatist regions of Donetsk and Lugansk, Crimea and Transnistria, a pro-Russian separatist territory located *de jure* in the composition of the Republic of Moldova.

Unfortunately, the river cannot ensure the movement of maritime vessels, except as far as Brăila (river-maritime sector of the Danube). Ukraine's main shipping company, for example, operates cargo ships that require a minimum water level of 360 centimetres, but the Danube has stretches that can only be crossed by ships that require a water level of 150 centimetres (Costea, 2022). Many of the Ukrainian transport ships are too large to navigate the Danube.

The conflict situation in Romania's proximity between Ukraine and the Russian Federation has once again brought to attention the role of a credible Romanian naval force on NATO's eastern flank. In the wake of recent events, it is clear that the Russian-Ukrainian brotherhood has ended, but Russia's interest in the Danube mouths has increased.

CONCLUSIONS – CONSIDERATIONS ON A FUTURE ROMANIAN MARITIME SECURITY STRATEGY FOR THE BLACK SEA

Considering all the above-presented elements, it is evident that Romania needs to offer to the North Atlantic Alliance as well as to the European Union a capable and credible fluvial force, able to counter the risks and threats manifested or possible in the fluvial space. Taking into account the good relations between Romania and the Central European landlocked states, it can offer a *"Romanian gateway"* to Austria, Slovakia, Hungary, Serbia, Moldova, as well as to other states, through the mouths of the Danube, the Danube-the Black Sea Canal and the Black Sea ports.

To successfully monitor crises and prevent conflicts, Romania must have the ability to ensure the protection of its legal and legitimate interests in the peaceful use of the Danube River. Considering the position held on the main fluvial transport artery of Europe,

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Romania needs fluvial forces that meet the requirements of flexibility, mobility, responsiveness, speed of reaction, and adaptability in a joint environment. They have to be capable of carrying out missions on the Danube, in the Delta, in the maritime area adjacent to the Danube Mouths, as well as in other areas of operations outside the national territory, on watercourses and inland lakes with depths greater than two meters.

The important role of fluvial forces in the national defence system is emphasized equally by historical, geographical, economical, and political-military motivations. Such military structures should have modern combat technical assets, namely multi-role river ships (carriers of artillery and dredging weapons), landing ships, patrol ships and logistic support units, to be able to carry out security missions independently or in cooperation with other types of forces or with the other elements of the country's national defence system.

The Danube plays a fundamental role in the current configuration of Europe. Thus, Romania, a state at the mouths of the great river, will have to assert its geopolitical position given by the new realities. Whatever the course of events, Romania has to face a difficult period and assert its rights under the conditions of the interference of old and new interests in the Danube basin. All these aspects prove once again the utility of the fluvial forces and especially the necessity of modernization for the adaptation to both military and economic crises.

Taking into account the already presented aspects related to the connection between the Danube and the Black Sea and, thus, to the high seas of the world, the idea of a Black Sea strategy has been debated throughout history, in dependence on different contexts. However, geography has not significantly changed. Therefore, the arguments presented almost a century ago can be still valid. In this context, considering the experience of Romania in the Second World War as well as in the previous period, in an article in *România Militară/ Military Romania* (Mocanu, 1943, pp. 39-41), an analysis of the projects related to a Black Sea strategy was conducted, including the arguments in its support at that time. Thus, it was shown that, although the development of such a unique strategy could be seen as too bold, taking into account the proportions of the Black Sea compared to the Pacific, the Atlantic, the Indian Oceans as well as to the Mediterranean

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Sea, it should consider other factors than the *"inorganic"* ones pertaining to geography, namely the peoples' interests and passions, which had been well understood by the European powers throughout history, proofs in that regard being the armed as well as political and diplomatic struggles, got materialized in treaties, conventions, commissions, which also included the Danube. Moreover, it was expressed the idea that the Black Sea strategy could be integrated into the greater strategy of the high seas in the world. (Ib.).

The mentioned aspects are reinforced by the fact that, for the past decades, the importance of the Black Sea has been acknowledged in many political, military and think tank documents. In this context, and taking into account the recent developments in the area, a potential Black Sea strategy for a new regional reality has become increasingly debated and necessary. In one recent study of the kind, among the reasons why the Black Sea region has come to the fore again, especially in the current context, the following are mentioned: the region is home to reliable allies and partners, Romania included; there are unfinished business for the Euro-Atlantic integration of some states in the region; considering it is a regional transit and shipping hub, in an era of great power competition, China and Iran also play a role in the Black Sea region that should be considered by policymakers (Coffey, Kasapoglu, 2023, p. 5). In this context, Romania is appreciated as having the geostrategic edge to become a central A2/AD (anti-access/area denial) hub for NATO in the region (Ib., p. 3). Therefore, the mentioned analysis, reiterates, over about a century, the idea that the future Black Sea strategy should be comprehensive, multidomain and integrated into a strategy of the high seas worldwide.

A special importance in this strategy needs to be given to the development and resilience of the critical infrastructure in the Romanian ports, which contribute significantly to both the development of capabilities for the Romanian Naval Forces and the improvement and efficiency of the storage and transport of goods. A solution in this regard can be the declaration of these port facilities as being in the national security interest and, implicitly, the provision of development funds through the Ministry of Transport and Infrastructure, as is the case in other countries.

The importance of the Black Sea has been acknowledged in many political, military and think tank documents. In this context, and taking into account the recent developments in the area, a potential Black Sea strategy for a new regional reality has become increasingly debated and necessary.

In the above-presented context, the development of a Romanian Maritime Security Strategy for the Black Sea, having also the role to inform and support any Black Sea Strategy developed in NATO, the EU and even in the USA as Romania's Strategic Partner, has to include the Danube River and the Delta. With the Romanian Naval Forces being the custodian, this Black Sea Strategy should be developed in close cooperation with all the national stakeholders in the maritime domain, based on the national security and military defence priorities and objectives. This strategy could also be the guide for the future integrated modernization of the Naval Forces to meet all the regional security challenges, the commitments and the national contributions to NATO, the EU, other organizations, and, why not, to become a regional centre of gravity in terms of maritime security.

Disclaimer: This is an informative article to increase the awareness of the importance of the Danube River and its Delta with some future perspectives in the current security context and it does not represent an official position of Romania. Colonel (N) Marian Rîșnoveanu, Chief of Staff, the Romanian Danube Flotilla, has contributed to the development of the present article.

The development of a Romanian Maritime Security Strategy for the Black Sea, having also the role to inform and support any Black Sea Strategy developed in NATO, the EU and even in the USA as Romania's Strategic Partner, has to include the Danube River and the Delta.

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION IN SUPPORT OF MIGRANTS INTEGRATION IN HOST COMMUNITIES

Iulia-Alexandra COJOCARU, PhD Student

"Carol I" National Defence University
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International actors, both states and supra-state organizations, face certain challenges in managing the migration phenomenon. Among these challenges, in the present paper, we have chosen to focus on those that may emerge following the relocation itself, starting from the premise that the way in which the integration of migrants takes place within the host community is a decisive factor for the type of effects that can be generated in the security environment. The purpose of the article is to identify the means by which the migration management system can be improved, in order to support states, governments and authorities in their efforts to maintain public order and the state of peace.

The analysis of the concept of strategic communication (StratCom) reveals aspects, dimensions, parameters and frameworks that indicate its relevance and usefulness in the smooth development of the process of social integration of emigrants, and the present study is aimed at identifying these characteristics as well as at modelling a StratCom framework that is generally applicable to any scenario, in support of governments, host communities and migrants alike. Finally, we will adapt the general working framework to a specific one, focused on the integration of Ukrainian migrants within the Romanian community, in the context of the Russia-Ukraine conflict near Romania's borders, given the actual situation that needs to be managed by the Romanian state so that possible tensions between the two social groups can be avoided.

Keywords: strategic communication (StratCom); migrants; host community; social integration; Russia-Ukraine conflict;

INTRODUCTION

Motto: "According to archaeologists, almost all the people on the Earth are migrants (...).
People have always moved in search of better livelihood. It has always been like this and it will continue to be".
(Altner, 2006)

Migration is far from being a new phenomenon in the world, and regardless of the reason for relocation, a scenario where this process will end is highly unlikely in the near future; on the contrary, there are good reasons to believe that the number of international migrants will continue to increase (IOM, 2022, p. 10)[1], taking into account a number of factors, such as the trends of cooperation in the international space, which, regardless of being seen as the cause or effect of globalization, have increased people's desire and hope to start searching for the best place to live. At the same time, the security situations around the globe (conflicts, human rights violations, violence, persecution) continue to give rise to an ever-increasing number of people who are forced to leave their country of residence to protect their lives[2] (UN News, 2022) and, under these conditions, the authorities make constant efforts to develop a system (policies, procedures, legal basis, infrastructure etc.) to support these people.

Migration can produce a wide set of beneficial effects within the host society, such as: increase in the labour force, flexibility of the labour market, contribution to the economy of the state in question, development of human capital, technological progress etc. (OECD, 2014). However, debates are also launched in expert circles questioning whether the benefits are greater than the *"burdens"* carried by the states for the reception and integration of migrants (Dettmer, 2019;

The security situations around the globe (conflicts, human rights violations, violence, persecution) continue to give rise to an ever-increasing number of people who are forced to leave their country of residence to protect their lives and, under these conditions, the authorities make constant efforts to develop a system (policies, procedures, legal basis, infrastructure etc.) to support these people.

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[1] The data contained in the 2022 report of the IOM (International Organization for Migration) reflect an upward trend in the estimated number of international migrants – from 173 million people or 2.8% of the world's population in 2000 to 281 million or 3.6% of the world's population in 2022.

[2] In 2022, a record 100 million people were forced to leave their countries of residence.

Tabaud, 2020). As a result of the expansion of such debates in the mass media, various opinions, perceptions and attitudes have been formed regarding the conceptual approach to the migration phenomenon, presented in studies based on polls (surveys) (Dempster, Hargrave, 2017; Dempster, Leach, Hargrave, 2020), which conclude that *"people have different and seemingly contradictory attitudes towards (im)migration – they can support restrictive policies while recognizing the positive economic and cultural impact of immigrants in their country"* (Dempster et al., 2020).

The present paper starts from the idea that public opinions, perceptions and attitudes are defining factors for the way in which migrants get integrated into the host community and that the beneficial effects for the destination states can only be generated following a *"healthy"* integration, based on mutual respect, understanding, solidarity, cooperation and communication between the two social groups; otherwise, there is the risk of triggering tensions that can degenerate into conflict situations. Based on these premises, the purpose of the article is to identify the means by which states, governments and authorities can be supported in the efforts to maintain public order and the state of peace as well as to highlight the means by which the migration management system can be improved in terms of the integration of migrants into the host communities.

In parallel, the analysis of the concept of *strategic communication* has brought us to the point where we realize that the implementation of processes specific to the field can serve this approach, as it presents all the characteristics necessary to obtain the effects we are looking for. Concretely, *strategic communication* promises, in theory, to generate effects such as informing and educating the masses to shape attitudes, perceptions and representations of reality, in accordance with people's fundamental values, facts that completely suit the idea of *"healthy"* social integration.

These are the reasons why, in the following pages, we will analyse the hypothesis in which the migration management system will be improved with the support of StratCom processes, to serve not only the interests of the states but also the interests of the citizens of the world, who have migrated in search of a better place to live.

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION – CONTEXT AND RELEVANCE

Based on the idea that *everything is communication*[3], the actors in the international environment have exploited the potential of this process, focusing on the influencing function that communication can have in certain contexts (Mucchielli, 2005, pp. 114-124). Although the term *influencing* is generally used and understood with a negative connotation, being associated with manipulation and (deceptive) exploitation, influencing encompasses a series of activities that start from simple information and continue with education, persuasion, induction and even coercion – through words and actions –, being *"a ubiquitous and fundamental form of all social interaction, essential to cooperation as well as to competition or conflict"* (DoD, 2009). Under these conditions, we will focus on *strategic communication*, which we will place in the information area of the influencing spectrum.
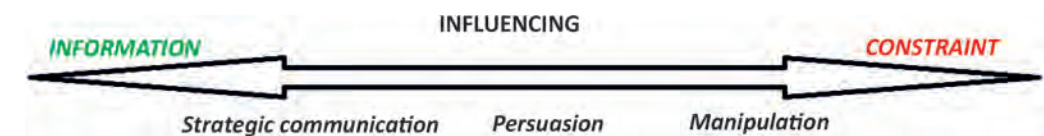

Figure 1: Influencing spectrum[4]

Strategic Communication (StratCom) is a concept that has been developed within multiple fields such as public relations, management, marketing, international relations, security and defence etc. In its broadest sense, the term refers to the way in which the communication process can promote the mission of an organization, with the help of a strategy based on desired effects (Thorson, 2018). In the field of international relations and security studies, *strategic communication* is a concept that was initially defined, in 2001, in the US *Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*, as the *"efforts to*

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[3] A statement that represented the core of the ideology of the school of thought developed by Palo Alto (California), demonstrated through a series of axioms on communication (Watzlawick, Bavelas, Jackson, 2011) and debated in numerous papers by Paul Watzlawick, one of the most prominent representatives of this school.

[4] The figure is the graphic representation of the result of an analysis conducted with the aim of classifying the most known public communication techniques and placing them in the sphere of influencing. (Cojocaru, 2022).

understand and engage key audiences to create, strengthen, or preserve conditions favorable for theadvancement of United States Government interests, policies, and objectives through the use of coordinated programs, plans, themes, messages, and products synchronized with the actions of all instruments of national power" (DoD, 2001, p. 515).

The concept was revised and explained in 2007, within the *US National Strategy for Public Diplomacy and Strategic Communication* (Policy Coordinating Committee/PCC, 2007) and later developed under the umbrella of NATO, which established, in 2014, a Centre of Excellence in Riga, Latvia (NATO Strategic Communications Centre of Excellence, 2020). The specialists here define strategic communication (StratCom) as *"the use of all communication activities and capabilities (of the Alliance), being an integrated part of the Alliance's efforts to achieve its political-military objectives"* (Ib.)

The evolution of modern technology has led to the emergence of numerous means of communication that allow the circulation of an almost unlimited amount of information, delivered by organizations, institutions and individuals alike. In other words, both organizations, public institutions (governments, political parties, officials, churches etc.), and individuals can become influencing factors (NATO, 2015, p. 4), and this fact has a significant impact on the information environment[5], since this is the main environment in which opinions are formed and decisions are made, being also the space where *"people and automatic systems observe, orient themselves, decide and act, based on information"*. (Ib.) (see *figure 2*).

StratCom is the process through which the information environment is understood and modelled, by engaging all means of communication (activities, images, words), in order to achieve the desired results (Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe, 2020, p. 6). Moreover, strategic communication is based on the understanding of the relationships between the physical, virtual and cognitive

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[5] The *information environment* is the virtual and physical space in which information is received, processed and transmitted. It consists of actors, information itself and information systems. Actors include leaders, decision-makers, individuals, social groups and organizations. Computer systems include the materials and systems used to collect, apply or disseminate information (NATO, 2015, p. 4).
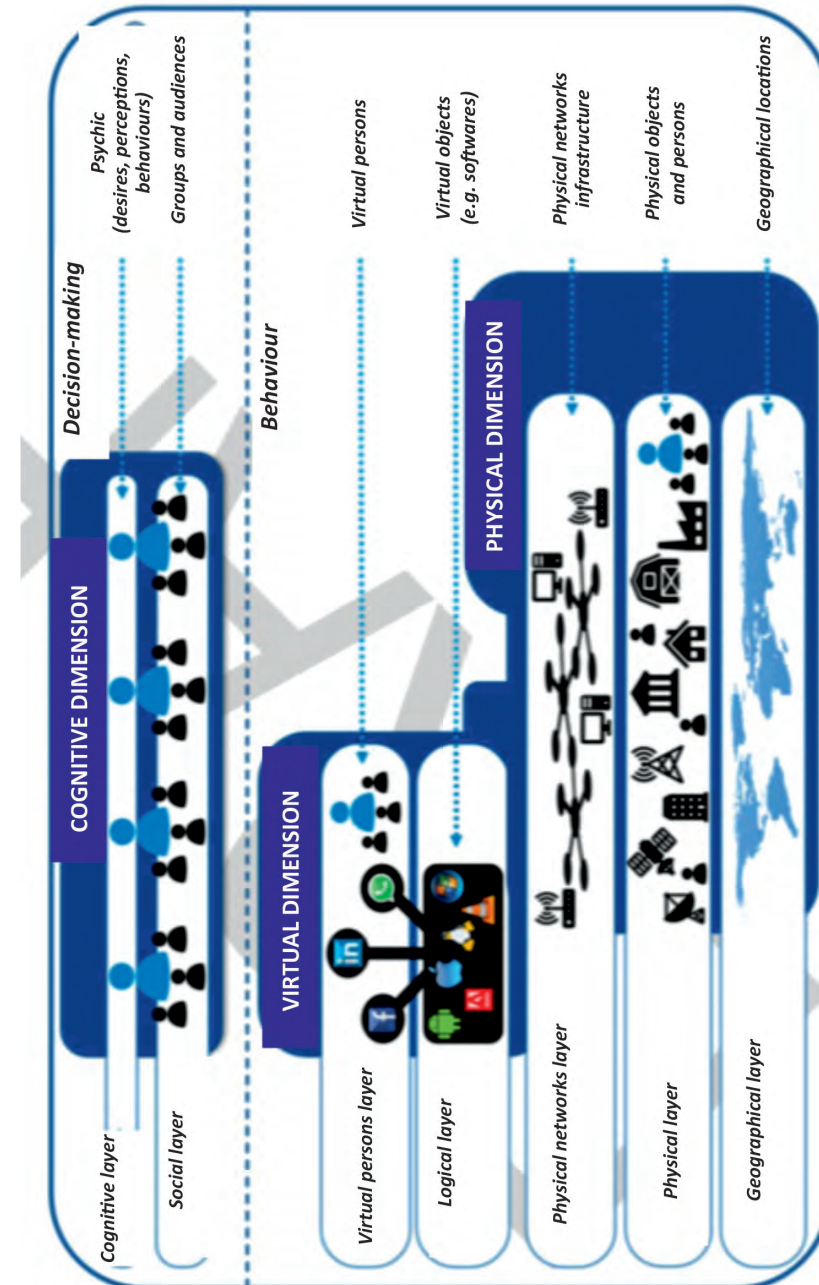

Figure 2: Information environment[*]

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[*] Source: NATO STANDARDIZATION OFFICE/NSO, 2020, p. 7.

dimensions, entailing, at the same time, the understanding of the public/audience[6], of the information flow[7] and of the cognitive and behavioural changes[8].

In what follows, we propose a radiography of the concept of strategic communication, which is aimed at briefly presenting its goal, principles, characteristics and the way of operation.

❖ **StratCom goal** is to shape the attitudes, opinions, behaviours, perceptions and social representations[9] of a certain public in support of meeting the beneficiary's objectives (e.g. NATO) (NATO STANDARDIZATION OFFICE/NSO, 2020, p. 3).

❖ **StratCom principles** are equally applied to all types of activities (lethal and non-lethal; in peacetime, crisis or at war). They are as follows:

- *Values*-based foundation – all activities are based on the core values of the beneficiary.
- *Objectives*-based activities – activities are conducted according to the objectives, which derive from the narratives, policies and strategies issued in a political-military directive framework.
- *Credibility* – credibility and trust are vital attributes that must be protected.
- *Alignment* – words, images and actions must be aligned with each other.
- *Information* – understanding the information environment.
- *Integration* – communication is a collective and integrated effort.

StratCom goal is to shape the attitudes, opinions, behaviours, perceptions and social representations of a certain public in support of meeting the beneficiary's objectives.

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[6] Understanding the audience is necessary to achieve the desired effects. It entails the ability to identify the relevant audience and actors, as well as the understanding of the way they process information, by understanding their filters and their reference criteria (NATO STANDARDIZATION OFFICE/NSO, 2020, p. 9).

[7] Understanding how information enters and flows in the information environment is essential for shaping or reinforcing cognitive and behavioural norms (Ib.).

[8] Understanding how to monitor the information environment allows for the detection of changes that may occur within information inputs or within conversations between relevant actors, making it possible to interpret these changes to inform the decision-making process and the operational assessment.

[9] Social representation is a concept that is more complex than perception, as it represents *"a form of knowledge, developed and shared socially, having a practical purpose and competing to build a common reality for a social group"* (Seca, 2008). The concept is defined in close connection with communication, since *"individuals and groups create social representations in the course of communication and cooperation, and they should be seen as a specific way of understanding and communicating ... because social representation thus becomes a link that unites individuals"*. (Botoşineanu, 2006)

- *Results*-oriented activities – achievement of the desired effect(s) and the desired outcome(s).
- *Power* – communication is empowered at all levels of command (Ib., pp. 33-34).

❖ **StratCom** essential **characteristics** are:

- *Audiences/public* – audiences refer to any individual, group of people or entity capable of observing the beneficiary's activity while being influenced by different actors. The public targeting is a way of classifying the actors, thus ensuring the communication activities planning that generates the most appropriate choices in relation to the target public. A simplistic segmentation results in three main public categories: hostile, friendly and neuter/not engaged. However, the segmentation is further detailed during planning, while target audiences are known[10] (Heap, Hansen, Gill, 2021, p. 27).
- *Narrative* – brief account of relevant events and information, arranged in a logical sequence, developed following a systematic assessment of the information environment, or a brief main message, to underpin the StratCom approach to be implemented (North Atlantic Military Committee, 2017, C-1). It is then used as a general *"story"* to orchestrate future activities.
- *Themes* – a theme is an overarching concept or intention that provides guidance for activities and communications. Themes are designed for broad application and differ from messages, which are strictly focused and directed at a specific audience (Heap et al., p. 41).
- *Effects* – an effect describes the impact (a perceptible change) on a target audience, usually articulated as a change in behaviour or attitude. Effects are the results of activities and they can be desired or undesired (sometimes called intended and unintended effects or second- or third-order effects) (Ib.).

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[10] The knowledge entails understanding different social segments within a target audience, cultural narratives, existing perceptions and beliefs, linguistic nuances, how information is received and processed by them, how information circulates within the respective public. It is also necessary to know their ability to influence the desired outcomes (Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe, 2020, pp. 8-9).

- *StratCom Objectives* – communication objectives focus on the general objectives, achieved through communication actions, which will support meeting the strategic objectives. StratCom objectives have to be specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound (SMART) (Ib.)
- *StratCom Framework* – the directives and guidelines in StratCom frameworks allow for the political guidelines to be communicated internally and for the execution to be developed up to the lowest level (Ib., p. 40).

In other words, StratCom functions as a common cognitive and working framework, which ensures unity in the understanding of the pursued political goal, in the directives that converge towards it, representing the binder of all the actions of the instruments of power. The most efficient approach to understanding the concept of strategic communication is the one that starts from effects[11], as the catalyst of StratCom processes is the desired political outcome. For a correct implementation, the outcome must be clearly defined and unanimously understood and, to that end, subsidiary objectives must be clearly formulated, based on strategic narratives that explain and support the objectives, as well as a consistent execution of the actions of all instruments of power (diplomatic, informational, military and economic), taking into account the whole set of effects generated in the information environment. (Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe, 2020, p. 6). StratCom effectiveness is related to the political guidance and support, to the innovation level involved in these processes and to the timely and relevant response capability in a profoundly dynamic security environment.

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[11] We want to draw a parallel here between the effects-based approach to strategic communication and the effects-based approach to (military) operations* to emphasize that military strategic thinking already contains this way of working, meaning that the implementation of StratCom in the military domain is shaped on the already existing military cognitive backbone.

*Approaching operations from the perspective of effects aims to combine military and non-military actions that influence the general behaviour and capabilities of actors to achieve strategic objectives and the desired end-state. It entails military actions that are coherently harmonized with those of other international, governmental or non-governmental organizations operating in the area. These actions lead to achieving the desired effect on the system, especially cognitively, explicitly linked to the strategic objectives and the end-state (Marin, 2008, pp. 12-13).

Effects – the physical or cognitive consequences, at any level, within the strategic environment, of one or more military and non-military actions (Ib., p. 14).

COHESION AND INTEGRATION VS. REJECTION AND SOCIAL TENSIONS IN MANAGING MIGRATION EFFECTS

There are more specific categories of migration and, implicitly, of migrants, but in the present paper we will approach these concepts in a general sense. Thus, we will call *migration* any movement of masses and *migrant* any person who changes residence, regardless of the place, reason, period or legitimacy of relocation, aiming to outline a working framework that can be applied to all types of migration and migrants and that can be later developed for any typology, scenario or narrative, by adapting it to the specificity of the given context.

Although, currently[12], the percentage of migrants compared to the total world population is low, namely 3.6% (McAuliffe, Triandafyllidou, 2022), we cannot ignore the implications of these movements for the security environment, be they economic, societal or related to public order. We will focus on those risks involved by the social collision between immigrants and host communities, emphasizing also the beneficial effects a state can enjoy if migrants are properly integrated. Mention should be made that, in security studies, the most often challenges related to migration are: terrorism, international criminality and border control (Tallmeister, 2013).

We consider that these challenges can be prevented if specific methods are integrated in the migration phenomenon management, aimed at supporting the cohesion between the two social groups: immigrants and host community. This statement is based on the studies developed by experts in behavioural psychology, who conclude that there is a very close connection between social rejection and aggressive behaviour, presenting a series of arguments according to which these attitudes can be educated, in the sense of encouraging pro-social ones (Stubbs-Richardson et al., 2021). In the present case, it would mean that the sense of rejection felt by migrants (and induced by host communities) can get materialized in aggressive attitudes and behaviours. Moreover, this process can become a perpetual one, given that citizens of the host community would respond in a similar way to such aggressive behaviours, coming from those initially rejected.

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[12] According to the latest report of the International Organization for Migration, published in October 2022 (McAuliffe, Triandafyllidou, 2022).

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Under these conditions, encouraging and, subsequently, developing pro-social attitudes is a key process in dealing with the issue of migrant integration.

Other references in this regard are the papers published by experts in security, who demonstrate the effectiveness of strategic communication in achieving the objective of immigrant integration and present the lessons learned in case studies – the successful example of Germany regarding the refugee crisis in 2015 (Shepherd, 2021).

The International Organization for Migration states that social inclusion[13] and cohesion[14] are essential factors for the *"healthy"* integration of migrants in the host communities, as they support the mutual adaptation of the two groups in contact (IOM, n.d.). Under these circumstances, international organizations and/or governments are responsible for the adaptation/formulation of the policies that promote migrant integration by consolidating the two processes. One of the greatest challenges is *"the fight against the negative image of migrants promoted in some parts of the media. These types of messages encourage intolerance, discrimination, racism and xenophobia towards those who seek new opportunities outside their home country. This rejection can have negative effects on the physical and mental health of migrants, on their contribution to work and to culture, which implicitly affects the benefits for host communities"* (IOM, 2022).

As it has been previously mentioned, strategic communication is the process that can inform the public and simultaneously shape perceptions, attitudes or even social representations. In this context, we will further identify the ways in which StratCom processes can be put into practice in support of migrant integration policies, following the working models and examples of such frameworks, suggested by specialists. Thus, we will attempt to put together the main elements of a StratCom framework, according to NATO vision and guidelines, by adapting a model advanced by the StratCom Centre of Excellence (for further details see Heap, Hansen, Gill, 2021, pp. 42-43). The purpose

The International Organization for Migration states that social inclusion and cohesion are essential factors for the "healthy" integration of migrants in the host communities, as they support the mutual adaptation of the two groups in contact. Under these circumstances, international organizations and/or governments are responsible for the adaptation/ formulation of the policies that promote migrant integration by consolidating the two processes.

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[13] Social inclusion refers to the process of improving the capacity, opportunity and dignity of disadvantaged people to be able to participate in society, based on their identity (IOM, n.d.).

[14] Social cohesion is related to the sense of belonging to a community and the solidarity and tolerance between its members (Ib.).

of outlining this general framework is to provide an overview of how a strategic communication campaign could be conceived to strengthen healthy cooperation between two social groups, whatever they may be, in such a situation.

StratCom processes have as catalyst the desired political outcome, which must be formulated in compliance with the concept specific principles. In the present case, cooperation and solidarity are *values* that are specific to democratic states, in line with the idea of social integration. Once it is established, the desired outcome must be clearly defined and, in this case, it can be succinctly translated into the following statement: *"The **purpose** of this endeavour is to provide directives and guidelines for a healthy social integration of migrants within host communities".*

❖ **Narrative** – We want the social integration of immigrants in our country, to maintain public order and to gain the benefits of intercultural exchanges.

The constitution of our state is founded on values such as democracy, cooperation, solidarity and promotes openness to intercultural knowledge exchanges, from which our state can derive significant benefits.

❖ **Audiences** targeted in this (general) situation are:
- *- hostile*:
- - the public of hostile states, who promote conservatism, through messages likely to damage the image of the migrant, to produce insecurity, chaos, imbalance and contradiction in perceptions and, therefore, who create vulnerabilities within that society;
- - groups/individuals who promote messages that can deteriorate the migrant image;
- - groups/individuals (even among host communities) who try to incite immigrants from a particular region or cause them to have hostile attitudes and behaviours towards the host community;
- *- friendly*: groups of migrants.

❖ **Development context**

Global migration has currently an upward trend in terms of the number of people relocating beyond the borders of their country

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of origin (regardless of the reason for relocation). In order to maintain public order and the state of security in the targeted area a healthy integration of these migrants into the society of the host community, into daily life and into the labour market in the particular state is necessary. To that end, the cooperation between the instruments of power, government(s) and ministries is essential in the development of policies that ensure the cohesion and connection between the two social groups.

Characteristics of the information environment – the constant and rapid evolution of the mass media, which makes possible the circulation of an undefined amount of information, which can come from multiple sources (from the individual to organizations, governments, other institutions) and which can change behaviours, perceptions, social representations, including regarding migration, as a phenomenon, or migrants themselves. At the same time, an increasing number of hostile (dis)information campaigns are identified, some of which are aimed precisely at shaping the attitude of the host communities to reject immigrants, which means the emergence of vulnerabilities to the security system in a particular region.

Global migration has currently an upward trend in terms of the number of people relocating beyond the borders of their country of origin (regardless of the reason for relocation). In order to maintain public order and the state of security in the targeted area a healthy integration of these migrants into the society of the host community, into daily life and into the labour market in the particular state is necessary.

❖ **Risks**
- The escalation of tensions between the two social groups in conflict situations, with the potential of perpetuation over time.
- The manipulation of the opinion of a large number of residents of the host states to form influence groups to undermine the rights and freedoms of immigrants, as a result of the propagation of messages of hostile campaigns and, consequently, the violation of fundamental human rights.
- The development of terrorist groups, international crime, and the violation of border control rules.

Strategic objectives
- To maintain social cohesion.
- To deter hostile influences.
- To avoid the escalation of migration events towards conflicts.

❖ **StratCom objectives**
- To increase the level of empathy within the host communities in relation to the immigrants in their country.

- To deter the development of hostile information campaigns.
- To inform the masses about the mentioned intentions.
- To identify and disapprove hostile campaigns.
- o minimize the effects of hostile information campaigns.

❖ **Themes**
- Empathy and solidarity.
- Cooperation and communication.
- Vigilance.

❖ **Effects**
- *Desired effects*: Host communities are properly informed about the reasons why migrants arrive in their country, about their rights and obligations while they reside in that space, about the benefits that their communion with them can bring to society, and equally about the implications that the communion can have for both sides.

Host communities accept to live alongside migrants and offer them equal (or within the legislative limits) opportunities to participate in social activities such as education, activation in the labour field etc. and support them in this integration process

- *Undesired effects*: Exaggeration of (our) attempt to promote collaboration between the host community and migrants and its presentation/reinterpretation in the media in a note from which host societies understand that there are more (hidden) social risks than those presented in strategic information releases.

Host communities are properly informed about the reasons why migrants arrive in their country, about their rights and obligations while they reside in that space, about the benefits that their communion with them can bring to society, and equally about the implications that the communion can have for both sides.

STRATCOM WORKING FRAMEWORK: INTEGRATION OF UKRAINIAN MIGRANTS IN THE ROMANIAN COMMUNITY, IN THE CONTEXT OF THE RUSSIA-UKRAINE CONFLICT

Considering that a campaign developed under specific circumstances requires for all contextual details to be acknowledged, in this chapter, we intend to model a specific StratCom framework for the integration of Ukrainian migrants into the Romanian community, based on the previously presented backbone as follows:

❖ *The **goal** of the present approach is to provide directives and guidelines for a healthy social integration of Ukrainian migrants into the Romanian community.*

❖ *Narrative* – We want to live in peace, order and cooperation in our society, alongside Ukrainian migrants, whom we support in their integration here.

Among the most significant values around which the Romanian state and the Romanian society have been formed are *"social democracy, human dignity, the rights and freedoms of citizens, the free development of the human personality…",* for which the state Constitution (Constituţia României) guarantees within the territory of this country. These values are in perfect accordance with the spirit of solidarity, cooperation, cohesion and respect for human rights and freedoms. Thus, the Romanians will welcome the Ukrainian immigrants with openness and empathy, understanding the reason and context that have brought them to Romania – the conflict that is unfolding in the Ukrainian territory – and, moreover, they will support them, to the extent of their own resources, for a healthy integration within their community.

❖ The **target audiences**:
- *hostile*: groups of individuals, Romanian citizens, who oppose the idea of accepting and integrating Ukrainian migrants within the Romanian society; governments, groups or individuals, from the country or abroad, who intend to destabilize the Romanian society cohesion by creating vulnerabilities as a result of rejecting Ukrainian migrants;
- *friendly*: groups of migrants; a part of the host community; national media;
- *neutral*: a part of the host community; international media.

❖ *Development context*

One of the effects of the Russian invasion of Ukraine is the migration of Ukrainian citizens out of the conflict zone either to protect themselves from possible life-threatening attacks or as a result of the destruction of their homes. Under these conditions, until 24 January 2023, 7,996,573 Ukrainian citizens (19% of the population of Ukraine) decided to leave their country of residence and look for new homes outside the borders (Centre for Research and Analysis of Migration, 2023), of whom a good part chose Romania as their country of destination (106,644 Ukrainian citizens, as of 15 January 2023; Statista, 2023).

Among the most significant values around which the Romanian state and the Romanian society have been formed are "social democracy, human dignity, the rights and freedoms of citizens, the free development of the human personality…", for which the state Constitution guarantees within the territory of this country. These values are in perfect accordance with the spirit of solidarity, cooperation, cohesion and respect for human rights and freedoms.

❖ *Risks*

The emergence of tensions or even conflicts between Romanian citizens and Ukrainian refugees.

❖ *Strategic objectives*
- To maintain social cohesion within the territory of Romania.
- To avoid the emergence of tensions between Romanian citizens and Ukrainian immigrants, which can result in destabilizing public order.
- To deter hostile influences.

❖ *StratCom objectives*
- To increase the level of empathy among Romanian citizens in relation to the situation of Ukrainian refugees.
- To properly inform Romanian citizens about the rights and obligations of Ukrainian refugees while they are within the territory of our country.
- To deter hostile information campaigns meant to generate tensions between the government and the state institutions, Romanian citizens, and Ukrainian refugees.

❖ *Themes*
- Empathy and solidarity: We understand the situation Ukrainian civilians are going through and the reason why they chose to leave their country, some of them seeking refuge within the territory of Romania. We want to welcome and treat them with the same attitude as we would like to be received and hosted in a similar situation.
- Cooperation and communication: We want to be constantly informed about the situation of Ukrainian refugees (needs, requests, possible problems), in order to provide answers or explanations in a timely manner, before possible tensions emerge.
- Vigilance: We identify hostile information actions and deter and combat them by informing the public about their existence, the actual situation (presenting concrete arguments/evidence to support this reality), as well as the way in which citizens can identify such hostile situations/attempts.

To properly inform Romanian citizens about the rights and obligations of Ukrainian refugees while they are within the territory of our country is a major StratCom's objectives.

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❖ *Effects*

- *Desired effects*: Romanian citizens are properly informed and understand the reasons that made Ukrainian refugees leave their country of origin and choose Romania as a country of destination. Moreover, they understand what their rights and obligations are while being within the territory of Romania, in this way increasing the level of empathy of Romanians towards Ukrainian refugees. At the same time, the benefits that the tension-free communion between Romanians and Ukrainian migrants can bring to the Romanian society are presented and understood.

Romanian citizens accept to live alongside Ukrainian refugees and respect their rights, offering them equal (or within the legislative limits) opportunities to participate in the entire set of social activities such as: education, health, activation in the labour field etc.; they also support them in the process of integration into the Romanian society, within the limits of the resources they have.

- *Undesired effect*: The exaggeration of (our) attempt to promote collaboration between the Romanian community and Ukrainian migrants and its presentation/reinterpretation through social networks as a threat and not as a situation per se or, at most, a challenge, a fact that could provoke *"xenophobic and racist attitudes, the exclusion of immigrant groups and their perception as ‹the others›"*, according to some experts in the field (Mavrokefalos, 2022).

FINAL CONCLUSIONS AND OBSERVATIONS

The analysis conducted in this article presents a series of arguments that support the hypothesis formulated in the beginning, namely that *the implementation of StratCom processes can support the efforts meant to maintain the state of peace, in the context of the integration of migrants into host communities.* However, for its validation and for the construction of a theory, it is necessary to implement the suggested frameworks. That is why we consider the development of a series of comprehensive studies to complement and continue this approach as necessary.

In this way, we want to highlight the fact that understanding the security environment and managing the challenges that emerge are

Romanian citizens are properly informed and understand the reasons that made Ukrainian refugees leave their country of origin and choose Romania as a country of destination. Moreover, they understand what their rights and obligations are while being within the territory of Romania, in this way increasing the level of empathy of Romanians towards Ukrainian refugees.

no longer a matter for security and defence experts, and the optimal solutions to respond to various security situations can only come from a transdisciplinary and intradisciplinary approach, in which the skills and experience of specialists from related fields (such as the field of communication, public relations) interpenetrate, in order to develop the possible response scenarios in the most comprehensive and complex manner.

Thus, the identification of the compatibility between the StratCom processes and those necessary to achieve the objective of *"healthy"* integration of migrants within the host communities and the demonstration that it is possible to shape a working framework to serve this endeavour represent only the first step in the broader effort to prove the hypothesis that the migration management system can be improved, in the sense of supporting the government authorities in their efforts to maintain public order and the state of peace.

The optimal solutions to respond to various security situations can only come from a transdisciplinary and intradisciplinary approach, in which the skills and experience of specialists from related fields (such as the field of communication, public relations) interpenetrate, in order to develop the possible response scenarios in the most comprehensive and complex manner.

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SPECIFIC APPROACHES
TO THE NORTH ATLANTIC ALLIANCE ACTION
– OPERATIONAL LOGISTICS PARTICULARITIES –

Colonel (r.) Professor Gheorghe MINCULETE, PhD

"Nicolae Bălcescu" Land Forces Academy, Sibiu
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The analyses, assessments, decisions and actions taken as a result of the initiation and development of the armed conflict in Ukraine have led us to study the materialization of some of the Alliance's operational objectives, starting with the nature of failures in providing the necessary logistical support to the aggressor forces, as well as in revealing certain aspects of the need for improvement in this area for NATO national and/or multinational combat forces operating on national territory.

Our approach is based on publications by NATO bodies, experts in the field, and procedures that are known, which will need to be greatly improved in the future. At the same time, our scientific effort has been focused on the need to pay more attention to operational logistics in the immediate future, precisely because of the increasing complexity of the operational environment through the intensive use, primarily, of drones and modern high-precision strike systems.

Under these circumstances, we have highlighted the need for logistics managers and their subordinates to be the first to act, proactively, to create the conditions of sufficiency, safety and resilience associated with the provision of logistics support, in order to achieve operational success for the combat forces.

Keywords: task forces; NATO Battle Group; operational logistics; Hub and Spoke Method; Linear Method;

INTRODUCTION

Complex operations of the future involve a range of capabilities, missions and relationships with holistic multi-domain effect (in the land, air, sea, space and cyber domains), which necessarily entails specialised, robust, flexible and resilient logistics forces, continuously adapted procedurally, technologically and functionally to the Alliance's increased requirements and demands as a result of the unfolding armed conflict in Ukraine (NATO Standard, AJP-3.2, pp. 3-5). All this is in line with NATO's Strategic Concept, under which appropriate plans will be developed and made available, employing a complex of capabilities suitable for deterrence, defence and the conduct of high-intensity multi-domain operations against the forces of competing opposing powers (NATO 2022, p. 6).

Within NATO, the Allied Command Transformation/ACT focuses its work on six key areas of interest, which reflects the leadership that is progressively, interrelatedly and beneficially changing the Alliance's military posture. As it can be seen in *figure 1*, one of the areas of major importance in the transformation strategy is *"Logistics & Sustainability"* (Riga, 2018, p. 27). From this framework, it follows both the need and the possibility for the theoretical and practical development of operational logistics through *"innovation, transparency, flexibility and evidence-based objectivity and scientific rigour"* (ACT, 2021, pp. 9-10, 29, 33-34). It thus stands out the need to focus on transformational solutions with an emphasis on the development of specific capabilities to address deficits and gaps in the field (*NATO Concept Development and Experimentation/CD&E*, 2021, p. 4). As it is natural, the performance of operational logistics is progressively dependent on the skills of specialists, the viability of technological innovations and the reliability of intra- and inter-organisational information, for the continuous mitigation of those vulnerabilities of a physical-cybernetic nature and the necessary increase in functional resilience (Fenema et al., 2021).

The Allied Command Transformation/ ACT focuses its work on six key areas of interest, which reflects the leadership that is progressively, interrelatedly and beneficially changing the Alliance's military posture. One of the areas of major importance in the transformation strategy is "Logistics & Sustainability".

The scale of the offensive actions of the invading forces on the territory of Ukraine, on the one hand, and the necessary determination in the defence of the national territory by the armed forces of the aggressed state and the population, on the other hand, revealed, from the very beginning (after several days of fierce clashes) major weaknesses and deficiencies in the provision of operational logistical support by the Russian specialised forces, generated also by the failure to take into account the resistance of the Ukrainian population to the aggression.

Figure 1: Areas of transformation of NATO's military potential
(https://m.facebook.com/NATO.ACT/photos/didyouknow-natos-allied-command-transformation-is-natos-warfare-development-comm/10155567147880686/?locale=zh_CN, retrieved on 12 September 2022)

The scale of the offensive actions of the invading forces on the territory of Ukraine, on the one hand, and the necessary determination in the defence of the national territory by the armed forces of the aggressed state and the population, on the other hand, revealed, from the very beginning (after several days of fierce clashes) major weaknesses and deficiencies in the provision of operational logistical support by the Russian specialised forces, generated also by the failure to take into account the resistance of the Ukrainian population to the aggression (Kotoulas, Wolfgang, 2022, pp. 27-30).

Thus, after tens and hundreds of days of offensive by all the Russian forces engaged in the *"special military operation"*, their complex action was doomed to failure, largely due to the impossibility of their own logistical structures (located at all levels of the invading Russian military organization, the forces services and inter-services) to intervene in a timely manner, according to the requirements and emergencies that arose, at the required times and places in the Ukrainian tactical-operational space (Skoglund, Ekström).

The lessons identified from the conduct of tactical and joint operations in the Ukrainian theatre highlight a number of objectives and actions to be considered by the combatant structures and, above all, by the logistical support structures in order to achieve future changes and transformations with a view to effectiveness, efficiency and success in any operational situation that will engage them in future armed confrontations with opposing forces.

The continuing political and strategic changes and transformations that have taken place in NATO's thinking and action therefore point to a new conduct driven by Russian aggression in Ukraine, but kept within certain limits to avoid another world war. Under these circumstances, the adequate logistical support for national and multinational forces to act in situations of extreme danger for the defence of Romanian and NATO territory is and will continue to be very important.

In designing and conducting our scientific research, we have taken into account that both the purpose and the established directions are centred on the names and contents developed in a balanced way, with novelty and relational status in the sequences of the paper. The achievement of the mentioned desiderata was made possible through the singular or mixed use of scientific research methods such as: identification and collection of data and information; analysis and evaluation; comparison; inference; elaboration.

ELEMENTS APPROPRIATE TO THE MODEL OF THE FUTURE SOLDIER. OPERATIONAL LOGISTICS IMPLICATIONS

The continuous changes of future warfare are driving the continuous adaptation of operational forces to counter a wide range of challenges and threats by framing, training and equipping them with new weapons and technologies (UK Army, *Army Restructuring*, 2021). As the weapons of the future become increasingly lethal through increased performance, it is clear that guaranteeing technological superiority on the battlefield will become impossible.

One of the major objectives of national and multinational operational development within NATO is the *future soldier project*, which has a direct impact on logistic support. It reveals a multitude of complex interrelationships and conditionings with the equipment (modern technical and weapon systems), thus meeting the Alliance's

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operational requirements of continuous assurance of the designed combat potential by achieving the desiderata of specific ergonomics, full effectiveness, operational flexibility and increased resilience.

According to the major objectives and strategies for the development and evolution of operational structures evident in developed NATO member states, the Future Soldier will be part of operational military organisations that are competitive, resilient and capable of countering the actions of opposing forces in any situation, terrain, season, weather etc. (UK Army, *Future Soldier unveils*..., 2021). This new type of soldier will have to operate, within established tactical structures, with highly capable technology (due to continuous technology and digitisation) and assessed systems in highly turbulent environments, driven by increased lethality, agility and protection. At the same time, he and the combat structures of which he is a part must continually adapt to the constraints of future operations, driven by the volatility of the strategic environment, fierce military competition between global and regional military powers, the proliferation of advanced combat technology, and the challenges of the information age and climate change (UK Army, *Future Soldier Guide*, 2021, pp. 3-27). *Figure 2* shows a specific model of the future soldier in the UK Armed Forces.

Military experts say that future soldiers must be fully and continuously trained, including logistically, to acquire the fundamental skills and ability to adapt themselves and their organisation to changing and transforming operational requirements in order to fulfil their missions. To this end, on the basis of receiving adequate logistical support, both the future soldier and the future leader must meet the parameters of biological, physical, intellectual and psychological resilience, as well as demonstrate effective resistance to stressors (*French Armed Forces Update*, 2021, pp. 16-17).

Depending on the given missions, the future soldier, the combatant and logistic leaders, and their operational tactical organisations (lower and upper echelons) will effectively and efficiently reveal a predominantly *human-equipment (modern technical and weapon systems) relational approach*. Within this framework, there will be a continuous integration of the mentioned soldier into the specific mechanism of preparing and conducting tactical and joint operations,
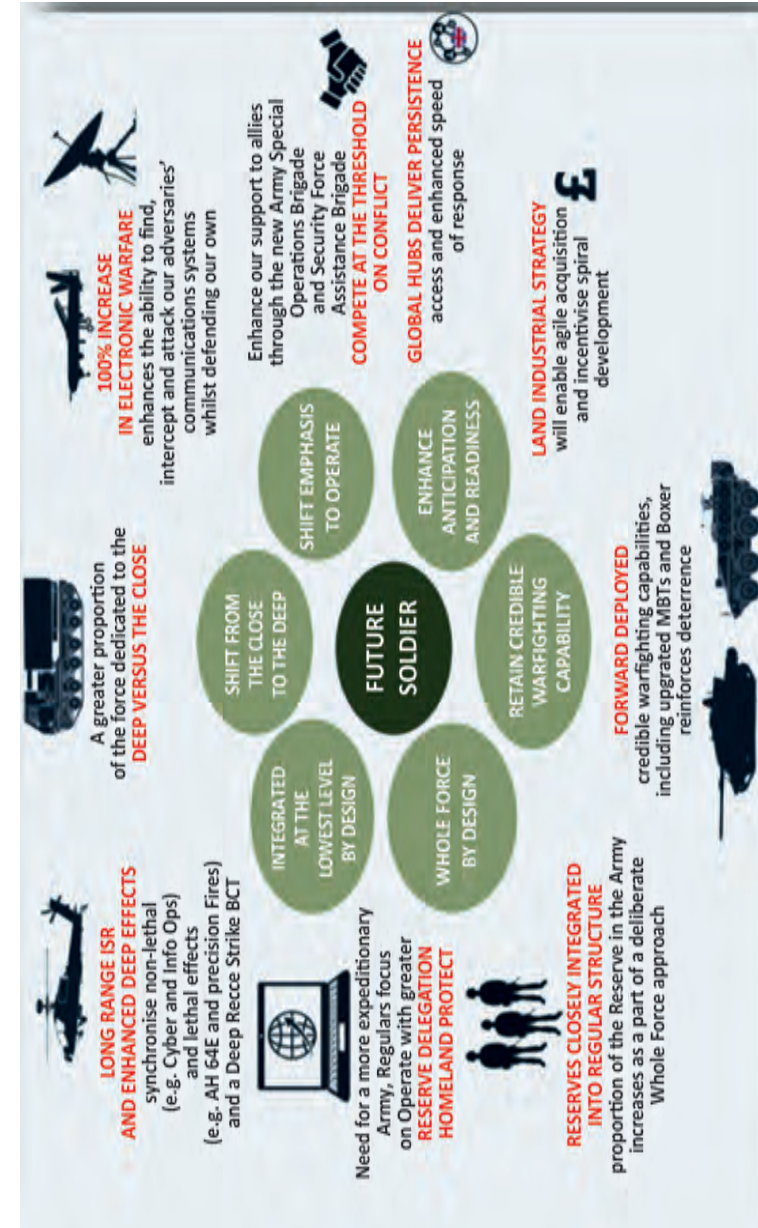
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Figure 2: Projection of the future soldier in the UK Army
(UK Army. Future Soldier Transforming, 2021, p. 9)

in order to avoid the effects of surprise, uncertainty, and to increase resilience, based on the comprehensive, constant and dynamic assessment of the actional risks, as well as on the effective and efficient ways of providing and protecting the necessary logistic support not only in operational concepts and planning but also in their implementation (Ib., p. 17).

To achieve the envisaged success in tactical and/or joint operations, the future soldier has a fundamental role through continuous training and education, equipping and the ability to use all modern equipment and weapon systems. It has immediate implications for the operational logistics of the combat structures in terms of providing the necessary logistical support (by functional area), according to the complex requirements established for the fulfilment of the missions assigned.

RECONFIGURATIONS IN THE NORTH ATLANTIC ALLIANCE OPERATIONAL SPHERE

Based on the operational concept, the combat agility of Alliance forces is revealed by their logistical potential, which is necessary to combine and move capabilities rapidly over long distances to conduct planned operations in austere, fragile environments with vulnerable critical infrastructure. To this end, the NATO Defence Planning Process/NDPP also sets out details for component nations to follow in order to identify risks and strengthen specific resilience by committing national and multinational resources according to Alliance availabilities (*Transforming NATO Logistics*, 2017, pp. 3-5).

Given the particularly important role of operational logistics, the range of its importance and action encompasses both the national side of a NATO member state and the multinational domain, as military partnerships with powerful (Alliance member) countries such as the United States of America, Canada, France, the United Kingdom and others have, over the years, have led to deployments of their forces to form Battle Groups/BGs under NATO auspices. Currently, there are 8 such structures, as follows: 4 BGs have been operational since 2017 on the territories of the Baltic states – Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland, based on the details agreed in 2016 at the NATO Summit in Warsaw; 4 BGs have been established and will be operational in 2022

The NATO Defence Planning Process/NDPP also sets out details for component nations to follow in order to identify risks and strengthen specific resilience by committing national and multinational resources according to Alliance availabilities.

on the territories of Hungary, Slovakia, Romania, Bulgaria – following the decision taken shortly after Russia's invasion of Ukraine (*NATO's military presence*, 2022). Each of these operational structures has a deterrent role and the important mission of increasing the operational level of national defence on the territory of the (Alliance member) country where they operate (*NATO's Forward Presence*, 2022).

Therefore, since May 2022, in our country, the NATO Battle Group Forward Presence (BGFP) has been set up, with France as the framework nation (at its request), which has deployed a battalion, considered a *"spearhead of the NATO Very High Readiness Joint Task Force/VJTF"*. It also integrates support structures provided (on rotational basis) by Belgium and the Netherlands (Defense Romania Team, 2022).

Following the dynamics of events on the frontline in Ukraine, as of 20 January 2023, the multinational structures decided by NATO to be progressively established (after Russia's invasion of the Crimean Peninsula in 2014) came under Multinational Corps Command South East (HQ MNC-SE, subordinate to JFC Naples), respectively: Multinational Divisional Command South East (HQ MND-SE); NFIU ROU (Force Integration Unit/Romania); NFIU-BGR (Force Integration Unit/Bulgaria). For the fulfilment of its operational missions in armed conflict, HQ MND-SE subordinates: Multinational Brigade Command Southeast (HQ MN BDE SE); NATO Multinational Battle Group (MNBG), led by France, is established and operates from the military base Cincu in Romania (*Table 1*); NATO Multinational Battle Group, led by Italy, operates from the military base Novo Selo in Bulgaria (Soare, 2023).

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Table 1. An option for the composition of the NATO Battle Group located in Romania

Battlegroup led by France, operating in Cincu, Romania		
Contributor	**Troops**	**Forces**
France	550	1 x Infantry battalion
Belgium	248	Combined Arms Tactical Subgroup
Poland	230	1 x Mechanised company with enablers
United States	120	Cavalry troop
Approximate total troop number: 1148		

Following Russia's punitive actions in Ukraine, after Ukrainian forces damaged the bridge over the Kerch Strait, the President of France ordered the doubling of the combat potential of the aforementioned Battle Group (deployed in Cincu) by additionally deploying a *"company of armoured infantry vehicles"* and a *"squadron of Leclerc tanks"* in October-November 2022 (Romania Posts English, 2022). At the same time, there are also Battle Groups operating in Romania comprising only US-trained forces (*NATO fighting in Romania*). It follows that, with the additions made, *"France has strengthened its presence by deploying as heavy equipment: 20 armoured infantry vehicles; 13 Leclerc tanks"* (In *Romania's neighbouring Ukraine*..., 2022).

According to published data, there is currently a *"battalion under French command at the NATO training base in Cincu, with 700 soldiers – 620 French and 80 Dutch infantrymen – supported by another 300 French soldiers. The aim is to reach a total of 1,200 soldiers once the accommodation capabilities are completed"*. At the same time, Battle Groups comprising only US-trained combat forces are operating in Romania (*NATO fights in Romania*..., 2022)

In fact, the above mentioned decisions are based on the decisions taken during the NATO Summit of 29 June 2022 held in Madrid, when the Allies analysed and established the structural development of the Battle Groups (with NATO multinational status), from battalion size and function up to the maximum brigade level, according to the requirements and emergencies that are necessary from an operational point of view in the Eastern Flank of the Alliance (*Madrid Summit Declaration*), in order to prevent some syncope or crisis in terms of military potential. In this respect, the provisions of the *new NATO Strategic Concept* (adopted in Madrid) reveal three essential dimensions to be fulfilled by Alliance forces, namely: *deterrence and defence; crisis prevention and management; cooperative security* (Ib.).

According to the European Concept for Action and Support, a BG conducts operations in its own right or as a spearhead in order to prepare the battlefield in the conflict area for more comprehensive operations (European Union External Action..., 2017). So, in a war situation (according to established agreements), the BG will be located wholly or partially in the Joint Operations Area (JOA) intended for the national defence of the respective state both during preparation and during the conduct of defensive actions. Therefore, the BGFP being subordinate to the HQ MN BDE SE can perform some missions and act with forces (having the appropriate hierarchical approval) in support of the National Joint Force in some (critical) areas of tactical operations (Francesco, 2015, pp. 535-563). Standard operating procedures (SOPs), cooperation and collaboration actions between BGFP and the combat structures within the (national and multinational) joint force are established in peacetime, taking into account the operational situation up to and after the (full) installation of NATO HQ on national territory (*Collective defence and Article 5*, 2022).

Therefore, as stated above, in addition to the BGFP, other NATO multinational forces are also engaged in the operation assembled on the national territory, and for this purpose there are still in peacetime appropriate multinational commands (corps, division and brigade level), the Joint Force Command (JFC), which during the armed conflict will be functionally augmented in order to fulfil the missions received from the Joint Alliance Command, operational in Naples (NATO Standard AJP-3, pp. 1-16 - 1-21).

NEW RELATIONAL APPROACHES TO NATIONAL AND MULTINATIONAL OPERATIONAL LOGISTICS

The transformation and modernisation of operational logistics within the Alliance requires, in our view, several key objectives to be kept in mind in order to increase the potential of the logistics support profile, such as: a complex level of responsibility, given the new demands in the provision of operational logistic support; high professional competencies in the field of logistic support, requiring skills progressively and continuously adapted to the new operational requirements; anticipative and pro-active conception and action of logistic managers and their subordinates; highly trained and experienced commanders at the head of logistic support large units, units, sub-units and formations; operational logistic support structures organised, equipped, prepared and sufficiently protected to provide optimal and continuous logistic support.

In the light of the above, we are of the opinion that the preparation and conduct of one or more tactical and joint operations at national

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level require an operational logistics with highly consolidated relevant operational capabilities (national and multinational), which can deter a potential adversary state before a crisis, with the ability to provide agile, robust and flexible responses during its (possible) manifestation. To this end, partnerships and agreements have been established between troop contributing nations and each Alliance state, supported by multinational forces integrated into the Battle Group, whereby optimal (specific) network systems and logistic capabilities have been established and made available to each other.

The combination of national and multinational combat structures that will be integrated into the organic joint force structure established to operate on national territory under NATO's tutelage and leadership requires adequate logistical support (national and multinational in nature) in accordance with the operational requirements and demands of the Alliance. The design, planning and procedures for such (logistical) support must naturally involve robust, agile and flexible logistics forces that are constantly adapting organisationally and operationally, as required by the lessons learned from the armed conflict in Ukraine. To this end, the JTF J4 logistics module is responsible for developing and maintaining the logistics common operational picture (LCOP) or the recognised logistics picture (RLP). According to AJP-4.6, the Joint Logistic Support Group (JLSG) is responsible for the major contribution to the RLP together with the Host Nation, National Support Elements and Contractors, with whom it coordinates on a regular basis. In accordance with NATO's decisions in this area, the states that participate with capabilities in the multinational joint force capabilities that operate on the national territory are responsible for providing the bulk of the equipment, weapon systems and supplies required for their combat structures. Therefore, in order to produce more obvious RLP for the Joint Force Commander (JTF COM), the JLSG will conduct judicious planning and coordination of distributions for the remaining to be secured materiel, using its command-control (C2) authority over the NSEs so that they communicate accurate and timely information (Cornett, 2020, pp. 45-52).

Taking also into account the provisions of the *"European Union Battlegroup Manual"* (European Land Forces Interoperability Center,

2014, pp. 11; 28-29), we consider that each operational structure within a BGNATO (including the BGFP) is logistically self-sustaining (effective and efficient, according to the established interoperability requirements and procedures), through functionally integrated logistic support entities (based on the missions received and the capabilities provided by each nation participating in the constitution of the BG), with specific materials (ammunition, fuel-lubricants, spare parts and products needed for maintenance activities). They must be replenished periodically (following the execution of successive re-supplies), through transport operations, planned and carried out by the logistic support sub-units of the BG organic, using on demand sources (military and civilian) on national territory, for the optimal functioning (with the expected holistic effect) of the BG. At the same time, for this purpose, arrangements for the provision of certain types of (usually common) resources are implemented through the NATO-implemented Host Nation Support (HNS) mechanism (AJP-4.3, 2021).

Based on the above, it follows that, from an operational dynamic perspective, the BGFP will participate in the preparation and conduct of a joint operation on the territory of the Romanian state against opposing attacking forces in several phases, according to the projected response options. To this end, we consider that the BGFP will benefit from the necessary logistical support, appropriate to the structures (national and multinational) in its composition, not only through its own efforts, but also through the JLSG (functional in the 3rd line of logistical support), if there are possibilities to replenish urgent materials in critical situations (such as supplies, ammunition, fuel-lubricants, engineering materials, CBRN, communications and information technology etc.). *Figure 3* shows generically the replenishment flows by logistic support lines, according to operational requirements (at tactical level, the purple and green rectangles indicate generically - by the inscription inside – only the presence of logistic support lines 1, 2 and 3, as well as tactical and joint operations areas – without spatial delimitations).

The elements in *Figure 3* reveal, in national and multinational operations on the national territory where BGFP is also engaged, the combination of two methods of replenishment, namely: • Hub-and-Spoke Method and • Linear Method (adapted from Ekman, 2017, pp. 21-25).
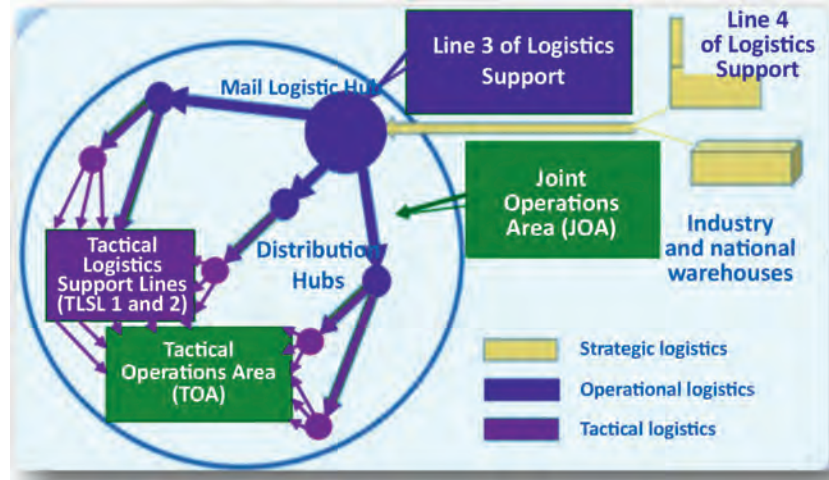
*Figure 3: A view of specific logistic support line flows in joint and tactical level areas
of operations with national and multinational forces
(Adapted from Skoglund et al, 2022, p. 102)*

Figure 4: A generic view of the Hub-and-Spoke method at tactical level

The first method involves, for the purpose of replenishment (according to the criteria of necessity, timeliness and protection), a large number of specialised structures: (a) the hub from Line 3 of logistics Support – represented by JLSG; (b) the hubs from Line 2 of logistics Support – represented by divisional logistics support execution structures (similar); (c) the hubs from Line 1 of logistics Support – represented by brigade logistics support execution structures (similar) and battalion-level logistics support execution structures (similar). *Figure 4* shows a configuration of the method at the tactical level, namely the demand and replenishment flow relationship between a brigade Logistics Battalion (Logistics Battalion/LOG BN) with a battalion Logistics Company/Log Co and then with its subordinate Battle Supply Points (BSPs).

The second method (Linear Method) is evident when a limited number of logistic support execution structures are involved in the execution of the replenishment process, namely: a) supply points of (similar) combat companies (similar) from which materials are transported (as required) to the platoons of the organic; b) the material or logistic support echelon (when formed) for the purpose of resupplying a small number of tactical combat structures acting in isolated directions (at brigade or battalion level).
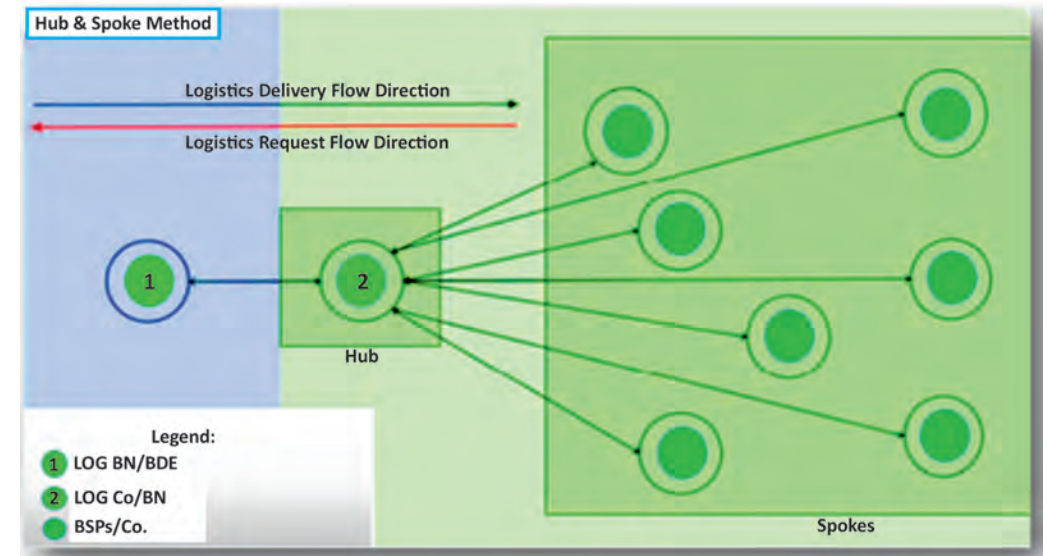
Figure 5 shows (only generically) a model of the demand and re-supply flow system between the logistics battalion of a brigade (national or multinational) with the logistics company of a battalion, continuing with the combat supply point of a company subordinate to it, then with platoons and groups.
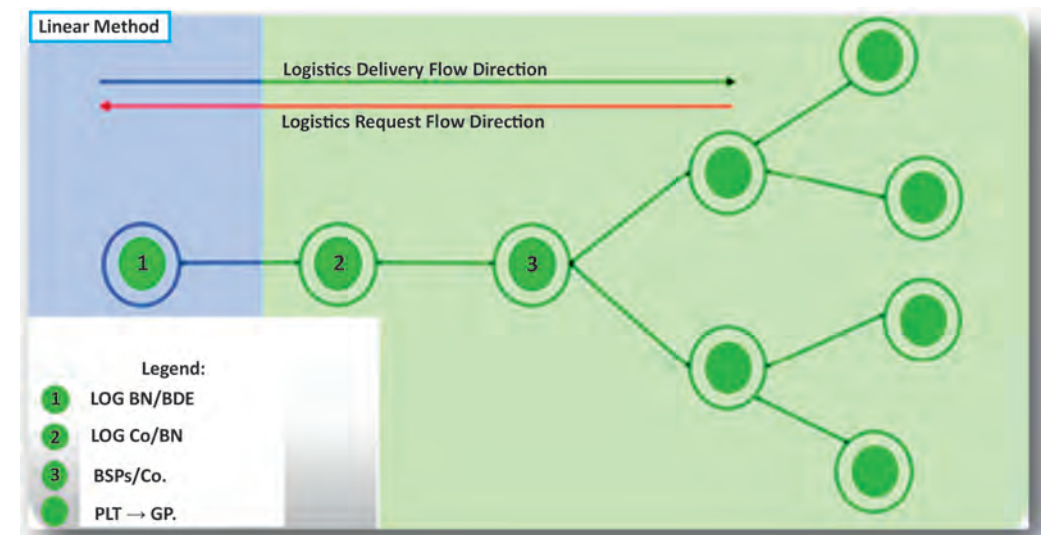

Figure 5: A generic picture of the Linear Method at the tactical level

In current and future hybrid and asymmetric armed conflicts, homogeneous or heterogeneous groups or clusters of highly trained and educated warfighters (within the same platoon and/or company level tactical structure or not) may act on command in nonlinear defensive operations against opposing forces, similar to the ongoing actions in the war in Ukraine (as a lesson identified; Greer, 2022). The configuration and reconfiguration of hybrid combinations, for the mentioned actions, will vary in their individuality according to the characteristics of each particular operation and threat (FM 3-0, 2022, pp. 2-18; 3-10). Under these conditions, with ammunition consumption being very high, the logistics forces (of each tactical unit or heterogeneous battlegroup) operationally engaged organize mobile modules (sub-groups) to re-supply the necessary materials. They act to achieve timely and continuous re-supply flows, transhipping materials using wheeled and/or tracked transport, and then involving specialist military personnel in transport and handling operations to tactical combatants.

On the Ukrainian front the smallest participant actionable entities (from tactical combatant and/or special operations structures) are usually teams (consisting of 3 fighters) flexible and trained for high precision strikes with strike systems – HIMARS known as *M142 high mobility artillery missile systems (HIMARS becomes even more lethal in Ukraine...2022)* or similar, against invading Russian forces. It follows, obviously, that even at this level the distribution flows are configured in a *Hub-and-Spoke* system by the replenishment *"on demand"* or *"pull"* process.

If we analyse the use of drones by the defence forces of our neighbouring state in violent confrontations with invading Russian forces, we notice the effectiveness and efficiency of their use by operators from specialised structures that are logistically supported according to what has been revealed above (Radio Free Europe, 31 October 2022).

The efficacy and effectiveness of the use of the two mentioned methods are dependent, in my view, on the effective realization of two essential criteria: a) *the real distribution potential of the logistic support execution entities* (structures) intended to respond to the received requests; b) *the response time to the re-supply requests* (received from the operational forces) by the logistic support execution structures.

In current and future hybrid and asymmetric armed conflicts, homogeneous or heterogeneous groups or clusters of highly trained and educated warfighters (within the same platoon and/or company level tactical structure or not) may act on command in nonlinear defensive operations against opposing forces, similar to the ongoing actions in the war in Ukraine.

It follows from this, according to *figures 3-5*, that the upper logistic nodes (involving the *Hub-and-Spoke Method*) have a high logistic potential (with associated risks), because they can support, with the necessary resources, a greater number of large units and units than the lower logistic nodes, corresponding to lower tactical echelons (involving the *Linear Method)*. However, given the *demand response time*, it will increase or decrease depending on the distance to be travelled (safely) by the transport columns with resources for military beneficiaries, and is therefore higher at higher logistics nodes and much decreased at combatant unit and sub-unit related nodes (Kress, 2016, pp. 167-173).

In real operational situations, round-trip transport circuits (on transport runs for each night or day for which they have been planned) are carried out from the hubs highlighted in *figures 3-5*, necessary to support the combat structures of the respective joint and/or tactical force (with specifics for resupply, evacuation, maintenance or medical support). For operational purposes, under performance conditions, I consider that communication, visibility and protection measures must be taken for each transport circuit.

As outlined, in support of the proper functioning of the JLSG and supported logistics structures, the concept of Operations Logistics Chain Management (OLCM) is implemented at the strategic level of the Alliance. Thus, the OLCM provides the practical means to make concrete NATO and member state specific processes, procedures and tools useful for collaborative logistics planning, prioritisation, synchronisation and coordination of activities during the preparation and conduct of operations (in a national and/or multinational context), to increase the speed and efficiency of the actions of specialised logistic support structures and to reduce wastage of resources and therefore costs (Riga, p. 27).

During the conduct of the multinational joint operation on national territory, both the battle group and the other subordinate Allied forces of the LCC (Land Component Commander) of the NATO JFC (*Collective defence and Article 5*, 2022) (established for the conduct of the multinational joint operation on national territory and operational after a certain period after the outbreak of an aggression) will have the appropriate operational logistics structures integrated. Their placement (conceptually and practically) in the multinational area is determined

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by the origin and employment of the specific capabilities required to accomplish missions by the combatant structures they logistically support in tactical and/or joint operations. Therefore, we are of the opinion that, according to the doctrinal provisions and agreements concluded, both Romanian logistic support structures and those of NATO member states forces will carry out integrative processes and actions (AJP-4.6, 2018, pp. 1-3) as well as cooperative (Madrid Summit Declaration, 2022) horizontally and vertically specific (through national and/or multinational functions) ones (Wenqiong, Yangyang, Haiyan, pp. 281-283), according to the SOPs of the major units and/or organic units to which they belong, in order to achieve the objectives of the joint force and reach the established operational end state.

In the design and execution of NATO offensive operations over long distances from home base, referred to as expeditionary, the national and multinational forces involved will be supported by appropriate operational logistics. Depending on the conditions, mobility parameters and constraints of each operational situation, logistic support must be provided in line with the mission requirements of the combatant expeditionary forces.

In the design and execution of NATO offensive operations over long distances from home base, referred to as expeditionary, the national and multinational forces involved will be supported by appropriate operational logistics. Depending on the conditions, mobility parameters and constraints of each operational situation, logistic support must be provided in line with the mission requirements of the combatant expeditionary forces. Within this dynamic operating mechanism (in a large space to be cleared or occupied with many risk factors and increased uncertainty), supply, transport and distribution systems with robust, sufficient, flexible and resilient capabilities must exist and operate continuously (Ti, 2022, p. 2). Therefore, tactical operational structures (national and/or multinational) will face increasing challenges from enemy forces in fulfilling their assigned missions [under conditions of *"freedom of action, concentration of effort and economy of resources" (French Armed Forces Update*, pp. 10-11)], in carrying out their own protection and movement actions as a result of complex destructive actions by the adversary using sensors, robots, UAVs and high-performance surveillance, targeting and precision systems (UK Army. *Future Soldier Transforming*, pp. 3-16).

Adapting, through reconfiguration and modernisation, operational logistics to the specifics of future expeditionary operations is driven by achieving the coordinates set to achieve the success envisaged in all phases of operations planned and conducted by the combatant forces. To this end, regular flows of resources and services are required to be made available by multinational modular logistics support structures and forms, such as: National Support Elements/NSE; Role Specialist

Nation/RSN; Logistic Lead Nation/ LLN; Third Party Logistic Support Services/TPLSS; Multinational Integrated Logistic or Medical Support Units/MILU; Multinational Integrated Medical Units/MIMU; Joint Logistics Support Group/JLSG; Mutual Support Arrangements/MSAs; Host Nation Support/HNS; Centralized contracting (AJP-4, Edition B, Version 1, 2018, pp. 2-1, 2-8; Finabel Coordinating Committee, 2013, pp. 12-13).

Accordingly, the appropriate functional mechanism for the complex and continuous provision of reliable, timely, effective and efficient (national and/or multinational) logistic support must be sustainable, i.e. to have a high potential to support all warfighters, equipment and fire systems in the tactical areas (districts) of operations integrated into the joint area of operations, as well as in the whole area of operations. Furthermore, it should be borne in mind that the operational logistic support effort (involving the essential determinants, i.e. demand, dispersion, duration, distance, as well as the prevalence of supply-based system, versus distribution-based system) will be amplified by the less or non-linear and more or totally non-linear configuration of the tactical and/or joint land forces posture (given their potential), which will consequently make both the logistic support lines and the related communication system more vulnerable (Ib. , pp. 2-3; AJP-4, Edition B, Version 1, pp. 1-8; 3-1, 3-4).

CONCLUSIONS

In accordance with the specific criteria of effectiveness, efficiency and interoperability, the North Atlantic Alliance has established the forces and resources required in both the northern and southern parts of its Eastern Flank. In this large-scale operational framework, Romania benefits from the support of significant forces from several NATO states, among which the United States of America and France stand out for the importance of the participatory effort. In this defensive mechanism of major importance, a special role will be played by the logistical support of combat forces with national and multinational status established to be engaged for the defence of Romania's territory, which is defensively defined as a NATO responsibility, in the face of any aggression. Therefore, the structural, systemic, effective and efficient reconfiguration of the fighting forces for the war of the future is based

The appropriate functional mechanism for the complex and continuous provision of reliable, timely, effective and efficient (national and/ or multinational) logistic support must be sustainable, i.e. to have a high potential to support all warfighters, equipment and fire systems in the tactical areas (districts) of operations integrated into the joint area of operations, as well as in the whole area of operations.

on the design, preparation, equipping and continuous provision of everything necessary for the soldiers of the armed forces destined for this war.

Ongoing technological, robotic, digital and other challenges and developments appropriate to future warfare confrontations are driving transformations in the military supply chains (which also integrate economic operators supplying goods and/or service providers in the tactical and/or joint area of operations) for normal functionality and increased agility, robustness and resilience (in line with the speed of armed conflict) against attacks by aggressive hybrid forces using advanced manned and unmanned destruction equipment and systems.

The increased and complex logistic support needs of operational forces are and will be driven by the continuous evolution of equipment in line with the national military strategy and the dynamics of operational requirements. Under these conditions, there are required military logisticians specialised in the management and execution of operational logistic support, possessing enhanced skills appropriate to the continuous evolution and changes in the mechanism of preparation and conduct of operations at the tactical and joint levels, which must be continuously sustained at the required parameters of sufficiency and resilience, in order to respond promptly, effectively and efficiently to the challenges, threats or aggression of any adversary.

Ongoing technological, robotic, digital and other challenges and developments appropriate to future warfare confrontations are driving transformations in the military supply chains for normal functionality and increased agility, robustness and resilience against attacks by aggressive hybrid forces using advanced manned and unmanned destruction equipment and systems.

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DEVELOPMENT OF MULTINATIONAL FORMATIONS IN THE EUROPEAN CONTEXT – CONCEPTUAL DETERMINATIONS AND PRACTICAL REASONS FOR GENERATING DEFENCE CAPABILITIES THROUGH REGIONAL COOPERATION INITIATIVES –

Dragoș ILINCA, PhD

Institute for Political Studies of Defence and Military History

This study aims to analyse the contribution of regional cooperation formulas in generating multinational formations that may be subject to participation in crisis management operations. From a chronological perspective, the development of formats of interaction in the field of defence were initiated in the period immediately following the Second World War, having as dominant reasons the creation of an efficient defence system to counter the Soviet threat. The criteria underlying the emergence of such formats undoubtedly concerned historical experience and affinities between European states, reinforced by the advantages of using geographical proximity in the development of joint programmes with immediate military applicability. On those coordinates, the regional dynamics recorded significant developments in the following decades, most of the initiatives being connected to varying degrees to the defence effort carried out in the context of NATO and the Western European Union (WEU).

The end of the Cold War and, subsequently, the reorientation of multinational defence cooperation in support of crisis management efforts brought new challenges and opportunities for the optimization of regional interaction formulas. Most of them were focused on capitalizing on the results recorded in the operational contexts of the period, through which the structures generated through the regional cooperation were tested in demanding operational environments, offering validations for the continuation of this type of interaction and the consolidation of their permanence. Under those auspices, the launch of the European Security and Defence Policy provided an additional opportunity to exploit the potential of regional cooperation formats. Basically, they proved to be a link between the potential developed under the aegis of the WEU and the process of creating the EU profile in the field of security and defence. Regional cooperation initiatives must also be seen as an essential provider of forces and capabilities to support the objectives adopted by the EU in the context of defence cooperation. This trend has intensified as the European defence project has advanced, offering consolidated prospects for supporting this endeavour.

Keywords: CSDP; Battle Group; FAWEU; EUROFOR; EUROMARFOR;

INTRODUCTION

After the end of the Second World War, the concern for ensuring security in Europe in the conditions of the outbreak of the Cold War, led to a more careful approach to the opportunities that multinational cooperation could offer. The immediate modality was aimed at pooling available forces and capabilities within formations established through arrangements/agreements between Western European states. The approach was dictated to a decisive extent by the insufficient level of resources for defence, especially in the specific circumstances of the first post-conflict decades. Thus, the only option that could be used was to associate existing capabilities and create higher-level structures that could help to ensure a defence system as close as possible to the requirements of the security environment.

Clearly, the emergence of international organizations with a role in ensuring European defence favoured the mentioned approach, offering a plus of concreteness by promoting standardization and framing it in a common typology of force and capability generation. From a chronological perspective, the emergence of cooperation formulas in the development of multinational formations is placed especially in the two-decade period after the end of the war. This period corresponds to substantial developments in the security policies of some NATO member states, such as the withdrawal of France from the integrated military structure, respectively the US decision to diminish the military presence in Europe, in the context of the Vietnam War.

The period also records the initiation of discussions at the level of the North Atlantic Alliance aimed at implementing a number of defence doctrines, centred on the flexible response. The core of the strategy was to strengthen deterrence while having a significant impact on the need to develop an extensive set of conventional capabilities that would allow a gradual response to be supported in case the security and defence of a member state was affected. On those coordinates, the new NATO Strategic Concept to be adopted on 12 December 1967/ 16 January 1968 stated that deterrence at Alliance level is based

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on *"the flexibility which will prevent the potential aggressor from predicting with confidence NATO's specific response to aggression, and which will lead him to conclude that an unacceptable degree of risk would be involved regardless of the nature of his attack"* (MC14/3 1968, 10). In this context, the forces committed by the member states had to respond to criteria on logistical and combat support capacity as well as on tactical mobility. It was also envisaged that the arrangement of forces would respond to the concept of forward defence, with locations of adequate strategic value, so as to ensure rapid and efficient response. Last but not least, particular attention was paid to strengthening the capacity of additional local and Allied forces as well as of reserve forces. Those criteria were met in the context of the strategic premise that the main direction of a hostile action would have taken place in Europe. Based on those considerations, the European Allies had to contribute concretely with forces and capabilities generated individually or through cooperation arrangements able to meet the operational criteria and parameters established at Allied level through the planning process.

INITIAL STEPS

Chronologically, the first steps to generate the formulas of regional cooperation in support of the commitments assumed in NATO context are placed in 1962, when the German-Danish Corps (LANDJUT – North-East Multinational Corps) was established with its headquarters in Rendsburg (Schleswig-Holstein). The main purpose of the structure was to protect exposed/critical areas of Allied territory within the perimeter adjacent to the Baltic Sea. Under peace conditions, the LANDJUT structure was based on one West German motorized infantry division; one Danish division and German brigade-level territorial forces. For crisis situations, the structure of the German-Danish corps was designed to serve as a receiver for other forces and contingents that NATO member states would deploy to northern Europe, such as the USA, Canada and Great Britain.

In the coming decades, practical interaction between European states increased significantly. On those coordinates was placed the development of naval cooperation between Belgium and the Netherlands, subsumed under the objectives set, in 1951, at government level between the two states aimed at developing regional

interaction. In 1975, a programme for the development of the training system at the level of the armed forces was initiated and the system of joint (rotating) management of the naval forces was established (Joly 2021, 224). The framework was expanded by the signing, in 1987, of a new agreement extended to the Benelux format on defence cooperation and coordination. In the same context, it was also placed the development of an amphibious force, by signing a Memorandum of Understanding (9 May 1973) with the participation of Great Britain and the Netherlands through which the Netherlands special forces were integrated into a Brigade of this type of British Navy.

Clearly, the mentioned developments were also stimulated by the dynamics of the Franco-German reconciliation process, culminating in the adoption, on 22 January 1963, of the Joint Declaration of the President of France Charles de Gaulle and the German Chancellor Konrad Adenauer. On its basis, the Cooperation Treaty between Germany and France, also known as the Élysée Treaty, was signed. It had substantive provisions on the interaction between the two states in the field of defence from the perspective of: harmonizing doctrines in order to identify common concepts; exchanging personnel between the armed forces, including unit secondment; developing joint armament programmes and their joint financing. (Hill 2000, p. 64). The deepening of Franco-German defence cooperation would continue in the coming decades with the creation of the Franco-German Council with responsibilities in the areas of defence, economy and finance. It was based on the decision of President of France, François Mitterrand, and Chancellor Helmuth Köhl adopted in Karlsruhe on 12 and 13 November 1987. On that occasion, the first joint unit with the participation of the armed forces of the two countries, known as the Franco-German Brigade, which would be established in 1989, becoming operational in 1991, was decided.

The end of the Cold War generated an additional impulse to the cooperation between European states aimed at generating multinational formations, bringing to attention the importance of the design capacity of forces and capabilities in the context of crisis situations outside the European perimeter. Participation in the overall crisis management effort became the most important dimension of the work of international organizations (UN, OSCE, NATO and the Western European Union) as well as of the cooperation formulas developed

in different formats with the participation of European states. On the latter point, the importance of the developments made at European level in the post-war decades should be emphasized. The idea of generating a format of cooperation in the field of defence can be found at the level of the allied states in the Second World War, the first step in this direction being materialized by the signing, on 4 March 1947, by France and Great Britain, of the Treaty of Dunkirk. It represented a defensive pact between the two states, with the aim of repelling a potential Soviet aggression as well as preventing the resumption of aggressive behaviour by Germany (Sutton 2007, p. 24). On those coordinates, the Western European Union, the first defence organization of the post-war period to operate on the basis of the provisions of the Treaty of Brussels, signed on 17 March 1948, by Belgium, France, Luxembourg, Great Britain and the Netherlands, was established. Its responsibilities would then be taken up at NATO level (Rohan, 2014, pp. 25-26).

The concerns about strengthening the European profile in the field of defence generated the initiative to create the European Defence Community (1952-1954), a project that failed as it was not ratified by the French Parliament. On those coordinates, on 23 October 1954, the Western European Union (WEU) was established, the functioning of which would be governed by the Paris Agreements (23 October 1954) which made amendments to the Treaty of Brussels. The role of the WEU in the European security equation would be valued especially starting in 1984, when the Declaration of the Council of Ministers held in Rome brought to the attention the will of the member states of this organization (Belgium, France, Great Britain, Luxembourg, Italy and Germany) to strengthen the profile of the European contribution in the field of defence, under the aegis of the WEU and within NATO (Rome Declaration, 1984). The approach became more visible in the context of international efforts in the field of crisis management. Thus, in June 1992, the WEU adopted the Petersberg Declaration in which the organization acquired a better-defined operational profile assuming a set[1] of missions and tasks that it could accomplish through its own

operational commitments. The potential of the WEU was confirmed by the Maastricht Treaty in which the commitment of member states to the development of a security and defence identity would be integrated (Treaty of Maastricht 1992), to contribute to the strengthening of the European pillar within NATO.

From this perspective, it was envisaged to develop the role of the WEU without excluding cooperation between member states. The EU Treaty also introduced the concept of forces that *"meet the WEU operational needs"*, which would also be on the agenda of the NATO Summit in Brussels (11 January 1994), addressed in the context of the adoption of the concept of the European Security and Defence Identity (ESDI). Subsequently, the meeting of NATO foreign ministers, held in Berlin on 3 June 1996, placed the concept in the transformation process of the North Atlantic Alliance through which European member states could contribute to WEU missions and activities. Thus, the ESDI was linked to the WEU role in the field of crisis management, advancing a set of measures to ensure its access to NATO's planning capabilities (Sperlling 1999, pp. 125-126). At the same time, it was envisaged to identify in the inventory of Allied forces and capabilities the *"separable but not separate"* resources that could be used for WEU-led operations. Also, the role of the organization would be addressed at the level of the NATO planning process in close connection with the implementation of the concept of Combined and Joint Task Force (CJTF) aimed at strengthening NATO's capacity to conduct contingency operations with the participation of non-member states (Young 1997, p. 29).

On those coordinates, the WEU became the main platform for integrating cooperation initiatives between European states. According to the parameters agreed at Petersberg, the forces made available for the missions and operations of the organization were managed through a separate mechanism (Forces Answerable to WEU/FAWEU). The premises that were envisaged were aimed at:

- The fact that the WEU did not have permanent forces or command structures.
- Forces and headquarters engaged in WEU operations were to be extracted from the list of units made available by the states.

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[1] The WEU missions adopted on that occasion covered: humanitarian and rescue missions; conflict prevention and peacekeeping missions; combat forces missions in crisis management, including peacekeeping; joint disarmament operations; military assistance and advisory missions; post-conflict stabilization missions.

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• Participation in operations and making available forces were sovereign decisions and were determined after consultation with NATO, for the member states of the organization.

Starting from those aspects, the first multinational formation with a European profile made available as FAWEU was Eurocorps, a structure created in May-July 1992 based on the Franco-German Brigade. The command of the new entity was established in Strasbourg. At the WEU Council in Rome (19 May 1993), the two states expressed their interest in contributing through Eurocorps to WEU missions and operations (WEU, Rome, 1993). At the same time, responding to the principle of separable but not separate forces, the two states were making available to NATO, which was formalized by means of an agreement signed with SACEUR. Subsequently, the number of Eurocorps member states would increase with the accession of Belgium (June 1993), Spain (July 1994) and Luxembourg (May 1996). In a similar way, the association process of the Amphibious Force developed by the UK and the Netherlands would be carried out, it being made available to the WEU at the meeting in Rome. The trend would be strengthened over the next year by the decision of the Parliament in Copenhagen that in the event of a request by the WEU to use Danish forces within the LANDJUT it would be accepted[2]. Cooperation between the UK and Denmark also generated a new formula by signing a joint letter between the two states with the objectives of creating a joint division. Structurally, the initiative aimed to integrate a Danish brigade into a British mechanized division as part of the package of forces made available to the WEU and the NATO Rapid Reaction Corps.

In the same logic, the Multinational Division (Central) consisting of forces belonging to Belgium, the UK, the Netherlands and Germany was made available. The entity was established in 1992 and was simultaneously engaged in FAWEU and Allied Rapid Reaction Corps until 2002 when it was disbanded. The development of the military cooperation framework between Germany and the Netherlands

was also reflected in the establishment, in 1995, of the German-Dutch Corps, with its headquarters in Münster. The objective was to create the capacity for independent action of the Joint Corps as well as a ground component in a large-scale operation at NATO level. In the organizational chart of this entity were two German and Dutch divisions with a reaction speed in order to deploy within a period of 20 days being able to provide the command and control elements for a contingent of up to 50,000 troops.

To a crucial extent, the existence of the WEU and the comprehensive framework of the relationship with NATO led to the creation of new multinational formations. An additional impetus for the dynamism of that cooperation option was represented by the intensity of the operational commitments assumed by the WEU and NATO during this period. It mainly targeted the perimeter of the Western Balkans, amid the conflict in the ex-Yugoslav area. In this context, the successive forces deployed by NATO in Bosnia and Herzegovina, in support of the implementation of the Dayton Peace Agreement (IFOR – 1995-1996, SFOR – 1996-2004) were placed. In parallel, the joint WEU-NATO operation (Sharp Guard, 1993-1996) was conducted in the Adriatic basin to impose economic sanctions and the embargo on arms delivery. The WEU also carried out, between 1993 and 1996, the operation to support the Danube states (Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania) for the implementation of UN sanctions. Also, in support of international stabilization efforts in the Balkans, in September 1994, the WEU participated in the structuring of Mostar's civil administration.

In addition to the issues of participation in crisis management commitments, the need to meet interoperability standards was another factor in stimulating cooperation in generating multinational formations. The approach also came to address the concerns related to the efficiency of national defence spending, the multinational options being identified as able to offer alternative solutions that were much more efficient financially and with a high level of operationality. On those coordinates is placed the Franco-British cooperation in the field of aviation initiated in 1991, the concrete reflections of which were recorded in the operations carried out in the Balkans and Iraq. In order to capitalize on the operational experience, the two states decided to establish, in 1994, a common structure under the name

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[2] The particular nature of the Danish position derived from the attitude of that state towards the prospects for the development of European cooperation in the context created by the Maastricht Treaty. From this perspective, Denmark opted for not participating in the military component of the cooperation developed within the EU on the security and defence dimension. This positioning was maintained until 1 June 2022 when, following the referendum held in Denmark, participation in the military dimension received broad support.

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of the Franco-British European Air Group (FBEAG), and since 1998 the European Air Group (EAG). The number of states participating in this formula increased by the association of Italy, Germany, the Netherlands and Spain.

Almost simultaneously with those developments, the naval component of the cooperation of the European states was approached at the level of cooperation between Belgium and the Netherlands. Starting from the framework agreed between the two states at the end of March 1995, it was agreed to intensify the bilateral interaction towards the integration of command and control arrangements through a common operational centre capable of managing 40 Dutch and 10 Belgian vessels. Against this background, bilateral cooperation was extended to the air dimension by concluding, in the same year, the agreement to operationalize a deployable group. The main rationale for such an approach was aimed at making costs more efficient in an area with significant financial impact, as well as optimizing the possibilities of making air capabilities available to the WEU and NATO. In this context, there was also the initiative adopted in May 1995 by France, Italy, Portugal and Spain to create a defence cooperation architecture, known as the Operational Rapid Reaction Force (EUROFOR), to be made available for WEU missions and operations. With the command in Florence, the level of forces engaged by the participating states amounted to 12,000 troops, also having a naval component (EUROMARFOR), with multiple capabilities that allowed it to execute a wide spectrum of missions. Cooperation between the southern European states made further progress with the creation in 1996 of an amphibious force (SIAF) with the participation of Italy and Spain with a land component needed for landing (SILF). The structure was made available to NATO and the EU and could also be used in the context of UN missions.

NEW PARTNERS

The end of the Cold War also brought to attention a new reality in terms of cooperation in generating multinational formations as part of the process of preparing the states of Eastern Europe for NATO membership, respectively the integration into the European Union. A key role in this context was the launch of the Partnership for Peace (PfP) under NATO's auspices in January 1994. The initiative aimed

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to develop cooperation with the new democracies in Eastern Europe as well as with neutral states in order to strengthen European security and stability. It also promoted a practical approach to developing cooperation that helped prepare interested states for NATO membership. By assuming the principles and objectives set out in the Partnership for Peace Framework Document, the interested states were committed to promoting a process of substantial reform of their own armed forces, including from the perspective of generating forces and capabilities that could be deployed in crisis management missions (Volten 2007, p. 45).

Equally, participation in the PfP generated significant opportunities, embodied in concrete initiatives for military and/or defence cooperation between partner states. The main course of action was aimed at developing the potential for participation in crisis management operations under the aegis of international organizations. The approach was also a direct reflection of the development of political interaction between states in the region, materialized in the emergence of regional cooperation formats that would contribute significantly to boosting practical collaboration at military level. The first formula of political cooperation resulted in the adoption, on 28 August 1991, of the Declaration of the Foreign Ministers of Germany, France and Poland, which laid the foundations for the format of the Weimar Triangle. Its main objective was to identify convergent approaches to the future of Europe and to enhance cooperation between the three states. Subsumed under that approach, the creation of such a format of cooperation also envisaged the consolidation of the Polish-German reconciliation process, following the model of that carried out between France and Germany (Declaration commune, Weimar, 1991).

Also, the importance of cooperation under the aegis of the Weimar Triangle can also be seen from the perspective of the positive effects in stimulating cooperation between the states of Europe and, subsequently, in erasing the divisions imposed by the Cold War. It is in this context that the creation, on 15 February 1994, of the Visegrad Group, with the participation of Hungary, Poland, the Czech Republic and Slovakia, was placed. This format of interaction and coordination addressed a wide range of areas, including military cooperation between the participating states. On similar coordinates, in March 1996

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another cooperation format was initiated, known as the South-East European Defence Ministers' Meeting Process (SEDM) bringing together a number of states from this geographical perimeter (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Romania, Bulgaria, Greece, Turkey, Italy, Croatia, Georgia, Slovenia, North Macedonia, Serbia, Montenegro) as well as the USA, Ukraine, Republic of Moldova (observer). The main objective of this cooperation format was aimed at developing political-military cooperation in the region, in support of the good neighbourhood process, strengthening regional capacities in the field of defence as well as in supporting the Euro-Atlantic integration process of the states in this area.

The manner of practical translation of the political elements of convergence regarding the consolidation of the capacity of participation in the international crisis management approaches was materialized in the orientation of the cooperation formulas towards the generation of the structures of forces of battalion and brigade level. We can talk about the replication of the model used in the decades leading up to the end of the Cold War in Western Europe as well as the approach of a level of operationality capable of allowing the deepening of interoperability, respectively of providing the necessary resources for participation in operations carried out by international organizations. The first project of this type was represented by the Baltic Battalion (BALTBAT), created in 1994 by Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, also extended to the naval forces by the creation of a specific cooperation format, known as the Baltic Squadron (BALTRON). Starting from this initiative, various formulas were developed with the participation of the states from the Baltic or adjacent perimeter, as is the case with the Polish-Lithuanian Battalion (LITPOLBAT), the Polish-Ukrainian Battalion, both created in 1995, as well as the Polish-Czech Battalion, operationalized two years later.

For the states of Central and South-Eastern Europe, this period recorded an effervescence of military cooperation initiatives including the creation, in 1997, of the Mixed Battalion with the participation of Hungary, Italy and Slovenia (1997) and of the Romanian-Hungarian Peacekeeping Battalion. On those coordinates, on 18 April 1998, the Agreement establishing the Multinational Infantry Force, known as the

Trilateral Brigade, was signed, with the participation of Italy, Hungary and Slovenia. A few months later, the Letter of Intent for the creation of the Multinational Peace Force in South-Eastern Europe (MPFSEE) was signed. The initiative would be attended by Albania, Greece, Italy, North Macedonia, Romania, Turkey whose contributions would be reflected in the activation, on 31 August 1999, of a brigade-level force structure (SEEBRIG). To them there would be added, a few years later, the Engineering Multinational Battalion, for which forces and capabilities of the armed forces of Hungary, Romania and Ukraine were associated.

Responding to the same objectives, in March 1998 the *"Central European Cooperation in Defence"* initiative was launched with the participation of Austria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Romania, Hungary, Switzerland, Slovakia, Slovenia and Poland (observer). In particular, the initiative was aimed at contributing to strengthening the capacity of member states to participate in peace support operations. The concrete objective assumed at the time it was launched was to create a multinational brigade that could be deployed in international missions. The initiative continued to operate even after the abandonment of the objective in 2010 and, subsequently, the strengthening of the political dialogue in the field of defence.

The interest in capacity development in a regional format also covered the cooperation formulas initiated in the northern perimeter of Europe. The start of those initiatives was in 1963 when the Nordic Cooperation Group was formed, involving the participation of the armed forces of Finland, Sweden, Norway, Denmark and Iceland (NORDSAMFN). The objective of the format was to deepen the links of cooperation in the military field as well as to create a nucleus of pending forces that could be made available for UN missions. In 1997, the NORDSAMFN format was replaced with the Northern Peace Support Operations Agreement (NORDCAP) which, in 2008, turned into a consolidated formula for interaction between these states, known as the Nordic Defence Cooperation – NORDEFCO. Also, in connection with the demarches of the Northern states was the initiative to create a force structure at the disposal of the UN, known as the Standby High-Readiness Brigade (SHIRBRIG). It was established after the signing,

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on 15 December 1996, of a letter of intent between Austria, Denmark, Canada, the Netherlands, Norway and, in the following years, the participation in the format was considerably extended by including Argentina, Italy, Poland, Romania and Sweden.

REGIONAL FORMATS FOR COOPERATION AND THE COMMON SECURITY AND DEFENCE POLICY DEVELOPMENT

The assumption of political priority, through the Franco-British Declaration of St. Malo (December 1998) for structuring the profile and contribution of the EU in the field of security and defence was one of the main elements that would influence the evolution of the regional formats described above. On those coordinates, the decisions of the Helsinki European Council (December 1999) generated a distinct course of action that the cooperation formulas would follow with priority in the coming period. Basically, by adopting on that occasion the first EU Headline Goal (HLG 2003) in the field of defence, aiming at the creation, by 2003, of a Rapid Reaction Force (50-60,000) was one of the main elements in the formats of cooperation developed between European states. The consistent political support that accompanied the Helsinki decisions would also be found in the way in which the states participating in the various initiatives report on their results and their relevance to the objectives assumed at European Union level.

It must be said that this approach was also stimulated by the initiation of the process of transferring the responsibilities and functions of the Western European Union to the EU. In this context, FAWEU became, through the exclusive will of the contributing states, forces made available to NATO and the EU, for the latter being indicated the priority given to the achievement of the objective adopted in Helsinki. Along these lines, at the first Capability Engagement Conference (20-21 November 2000) held at the European Union level to fulfil the HLG 2003, the contributions advanced by member, candidate and partner states had their origins in the regional cooperation arrangements developed in recent decades. To a large extent, the approach allowed to meet the quantitative benchmarks associated with HLG 2003 that targeted more than 100,000 ground forces,

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400 aircraft and 100 ships. New areas were also advanced where there was a need to deepen cooperation and develop additional options (logistics, force protection, mobility, air and land transport). Under those auspices, in the following period, additional cooperation formulas were initiated at European level aimed at creating movement coordination centres as is the case of Athens (Multinational Sealift Coordination Center/AMSCC). On similar coordinates, the agreement concluded on 14 May 2001 between Germany and the Netherlands on cooperation in strengthening air transport capacities was also placed (Rutten, 2001, pp. 158-164).

The potential of the various initiatives in connection with the development of the EU profile in the field of security and defence would be valued in a practical way through participation in the crisis management operations conducted by this organization. In practical terms, the EU's assumption from 2003-2004 of the main responsibilities for managing the security developments in the Western Balkans generated a consistent level of participation of the member and candidate states in the various operational commitments carried out within this perimeter. It is worth pointing out, in this context, the contribution of the EUFOR format under the auspices of which quotas would be generated that participated, between 2003 and 2006, in the implementation of the mandate of the first EU military operation carried out in Bosnia and Herzegovina (Althea Mission). The naval component (EUROMARFOR) would also be found, with different levels of participation between 2011 and 2015, in the framework of the EU Counter-Piracy Mission, Atalanta (launched in December 2008).

In addition to these elements, the contribution of regional formats to the development of the EU operational profile also includeed the contribution of Eurocorps in the conduct of EU missions in Africa. Thus, between 2015 and 2016, it provided the core of forces and the command and control arrangements for the Training Mission in Mali. The EU's operational approach in this area was launched on 18 February 2013 with the main objective of assisting the armed forces of the Republic of Mali in achieving the capacity to carry out autonomous operations to resume control over its own territory and to combat terrorist actions (Council Decision 34, 2013). Subsequently,

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by reviewing the mandate in March 2020 and extending the training programmes, Eurocorps took over the main responsibility for the employment of the mission's essential staff for the period 2021-2022. Almost simultaneously with the engagement in Mali, contingents of Eurocorps would participate in the EU Preparedness Mission to the Central African Republic (EUTM RCA). It was launched on 16 April 2016 with the objectives of supporting national authorities in the process of reform and modernization of the armed forces (Council Decision 610, 2016). The presence of Eurocorps would be constantly found between 2016 and 2022, both in the training programmes for the national armed forces and in supporting the counselling and support activity at government level.

The association between the various mentioned initiatives and cooperation formulas and the development of the security and defence component at the EU level underwent significant developments in the context of the adoption in June 2004 of a new Headline Goal (HLG 2010). It was centred on strengthening the expeditionary nature of the EU's defence effort by introducing the concept of Battle Groups. Advanced as military elements of the EU's rapid response capabilities for crisis response, they would be the main item of the European operational agenda for the coming decades. According to the agreed parameters, the Battle Groups were to reach their final operational capacity in 2007, with member and candidate states to contribute to the endeavour by creating such structures.

On those coordinates, the approach entailed the use of the already existing cooperation formulas that would be adapted to meet the operational parameters and requirements of the Battle Groups. One can talk about implementing a continuity approach in generating the capabilities and forces needed for crisis management operations. At the same time, the continuity of those steps was also dictated by the interest in implementing a pragmatic approach dictated by the need to streamline the European cooperation in the field of defence, as well as by the capitalization on the operational experience gained in various external commitments. From this perspective, it is worth pointing out that the implementation of the Battle Groups project had to be carried out on the basis of arrangements between European states,

the regional option being implicit to ensure the practical conditions for the preparation and sharing of the necessary force packages. At the same time, the need to maintain the Battle Groups during the stand-by period (minimum 6 months) presupposed the existence of a resource of forces having a permanent and integrated character, being also the repository of a relevant operational experience. From that perspective, the only options that could be used in support of the HLG 2010 were regional cooperation formulas.

Starting from these reasons, the adoption of the HLG 2010 generated a particular interest of the European states in the use of the existing formats, a trend that would consolidate as the Battle Groups project progressed. The first formations of this type advanced in the context of the generation process developed by the EU for the implementation of the HLG 2010 were structured on the basis of the initiatives developed in recent decades. It is in this context that the November 2004 approach to create a Battle Group with the participation of Germany, the Netherlands and Finland, the core of which was to be found in the structure of the German-Dutch rapid reaction corps, is placed. Also, in the first half of 2006, Italy and Spain advanced an Amphibious Warfare Group, operationalized on the basis of SIAF cooperation arrangements. Similarly, on 25 July 2006, at the meeting of the Weimar format, the decision was taken to create a Battle Group with the participation of the member states of that cooperation format, which reached the level of final operationality in 2013. Almost simultaneously with this initiative, on 13 November 2006, the ministers of defence of Bulgaria, Romania, Cyprus and Greece signed the Technical Agreement for the creation of a Battle Group at the level of which the results of regional cooperation as well as the forces and capabilities contributions of these states were to be exploited.

The achievement of the final operational capacity of the Battle Groups on 1 January 2007 reinforced this trend, with new steps being taken in the following years to use cooperation formats to generate new formations of this type. Between 2007 and 2008, a Battle Group was operationalized with the participation of Sweden, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Finland and Norway based on the Northern Cooperation. On similar coordinates, the political framework for cooperation developed under the aegis of the Visegrad Group generated formulas

It is worth pointing out that the implementation of the Battle Groups project had to be carried out on the basis of arrangements between European states, the regional option being implicit to ensure the practical conditions for the preparation and sharing of the necessary force packages. At the same time, the need to maintain the Battle Groups during the stand-by period (minimum 6 months) presupposed the existence of a resource of forces having a permanent and integrated character, being also the repository of a relevant operational experience.

of this kind. Thus, in 2007, a Battle Group was operationalized with the participation of Italy, Hungary and Slovenia, generated by using the MLF cooperation format and with the Italian contribution. A year later, another Battle Group was generated with the participation of the Czech Republic and Slovakia, also developed with the support of Germany through the provision of command and control elements by the operational headquarters in Potsdam. On similar coordinates, in November 2010, the Battle Group with Poland, as a framework nation, became operational, through contributions from Germany, Slovakia, Latvia, Lithuania. The cooperation format developed through Eurocorps also provided an opportunity to structure participation formulas in the form of Battle Groups made available to the EU successively between 2010 and 2012. They included the participation of France, Germany, Luxembourg and Spain. Last but not least, there was also the contribution of the cooperation format developed since 1972 between the UK and the Netherlands that was used to generate, in 2010, a new similar structure.

CONCLUSIONS

As it can be seen, cooperation in flexible formats at European level was one of the main constants in the period after the Second World War. Clearly, it was generated by both the security realities that Europe was to experience during the Cold War and the need to develop a substantial contribution to the NATO-backed defence system. The association of these formulas with a distinct and relatively unitary European approach was a dimension constantly explored, initially in relation to the WEU, and then with the development of the security and defence dimension of the European Union. From this perspective, the development of cooperation formulas with a regional profile represented a specific form of the contribution of the European states to the collective defence effort. Their European profile does not exclude the contribution of different initiatives to territorial defence within the parameters of the North Atlantic Treaty as well as in the context of the various operational commitments that NATO has carried out, as is the case with those in the Balkans, Afghanistan or the Mediterranean.

The development of cooperation formulas with a regional profile represented a specific form of the contribution of the European states to the collective defence effort. Their European profile does not exclude the contribution of different initiatives to territorial defence within the parameters of the North Atlantic Treaty as well as in the context of the various operational commitments that NATO has carried out, as is the case with those in the Balkans, Afghanistan or the Mediterranean.

On the typology in which these formulas were structured, it is obvious the cohabitation of the elements of tradition, the geographical proximity as well as the common historical experiences in all the decisions that led to structuring the cooperation formats and the objectives assumed by them. Equally, the interaction between European states on these coordinates was the main form of continuity in addressing military issues at European level. The end of the Cold War generated significant opportunities for valuing the contribution of regional formats in supporting the operational effort by participating in various crisis management missions and operations. From this perspective, one can speak of a stress test to the new challenges of the security environment that most of the initiatives developed in Europe successfully passed. The results of this process were also reflected in terms of strengthening the potential of those initiatives on generating the forces and capabilities needed to implement an ambitious political agenda as well as in terms of the ability to design a sufficiently relevant response to support operational commitments. Equally, the contribution of those cooperation formulas to the elimination of the divisions in Europe generated by the Cold War and particularly to the resumption of the democratic and European path of the states of Eastern Europe cannot be ruled out. The significant increase in the number of initiatives in the first decade after the end of the bipolar conflict attested to this conclusion, with regional cooperation in the military field reaching an unprecedented level. It was positively reflected in strengthening the capacity of European states to participate in multinational operations and, subsequently, to meet the conditions and practical criteria necessary for NATO membership.

The development of the defence dimension at the European Union level brought new opportunities for regional cooperation between European states, adding relevance to this level of interaction. In particular, the launch of the European Security and Defence Policy provided an additional framework for capitalizing on the contribution and expertise accumulated through regional cooperation. This approach is visible both in terms of supporting EU operations and in terms of generating integrated packages of forces and capabilities as it is the case with the Battle Groups. Within the latter, the contribution of regional

The launch of the European Security and Defence Policy provided an additional framework for capitalizing on the contribution and expertise accumulated through regional cooperation. This approach is visible both in terms of supporting EU operations and in terms of generating integrated packages of forces and capabilities as it is the case with the Battle Groups.

cooperation formats has been the main resource-generating area, ensuring the sustainability of the European project in the European field. Under these auspices, one can speak, despite the diversity of cooperation formulas, of their significant contribution to deepening European integration in the military field. The particular relevance in this direction can be seen from the perspective of the predictability of regional cooperation formats in terms of the generation capacity of forces and capabilities required by a large-scale political project under the auspices of the European Union. Equally, the permanence of these initiatives, successively reinforced over the past half-century, provides additional elements of a guarantee on the sustainability of the prospects for the integrated development of defence cooperation at European level. How to make effective use of the potential of these cooperation formulas is a course of action that can strengthen European cooperation in the field of defence, not only in terms of quantity but also in terms of the capacity to support a broad spectrum of operational commitments.

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REGULATION OF THE REAL ESTATE INVESTMENTS MANAGED BY THE MINISTRY OF NATIONAL DEFENCE

Lieutenant architect Adina SEGAL, PhD student

Domains and Infrastructure Directorate, Ministry of National Defence

The construction sector is regulated at the national level to ensure a proper technical standard, as well as the coordination of spatial development at the local and national level. Real estate investments funded from the public budget are carried out in accordance with regulations regarding the design and execution of construction works, in addition to the clarifications from legislation regarding budget planning, public procurement, and the stages of development and approval of technical and economic documentation.

Real estate investments related to the defence infrastructure, which also includes investments for the Ministry of National Defence, represent a particular situation due to the obligation to comply with both national legislative frameworks and departmental regulations, ensuring both operational requirements and coordination of activities at the operational and tactical level.

By analysing the regulations applicable to real estate investments of the Ministry of National Defence, the article briefly presents the stages of making the investments, the institutions involved and their responsibilities, as well as some assessments regarding the opportunity to develop a code and a regulation dedicated to military constructions, which could contribute to the efficiency of military operations, thus ensuring the effectiveness and safety of military personnel, as well as saving of resources.

Keywords: defence infrastructure; specialised military construction; barracks; building legislation; military regulations;

THE COMPONENTS OF THE DEFENCE INFRASTRUCTURE

A component part of the national defence system, along with leadership, forces and resources, *the territorial infrastructure* (Legea nr. 45 din 1 iulie 1994, art. 20[1]) contains all the constructions and landscaping that can be used for national defence purposes, respectively: the defence capabilities, the national shelter system and the specialised military constructions.

Defence capacities (Legea nr. 477 din 12 noiembrie 2003, secţ. 4) are public or private constructions, necessary for the defence forces, which can be requisitioned in case of mobilisation or war. These facilities include industrial production lines and the related warehouses, transportation infrastructure, communication and information technology networks, buildings for health purposes, as well as warehouses for state and mobilisation reserves.

The national shelter system (Legea nr. 481 din 8 noiembrie 2004, art. 42) includes the constructions intended to protect the civilian population and the national cultural heritage. This includes the National Emergency Management System command points, public shelters and private ones made by the property owners. These constructions are designed according to technical norms approved by the Ministry of Internal Affairs (Ordin nr. 1.298 din 10 mai 2006).

Specialised military constructions (Legea nr. 50 din 29 iulie 1991, Anexa 2, pct. 8), represent the constructions, installations and landscaping built to support the activities of the institutions within the national defence, public order and national security system (SNAOPSN). These constructions are approved according to a common procedure by the authorities in the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Romanian Intelligence Service, the Special Telecommunications Service, the Ministry of National Defence, the Ministry of Justice, the Foreign Intelligence Service or the Protection and Security Service, each institution approving the works from the real estate domain it manages.

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[1] Law nr. 45 of 1 July 1994, Art. 20.

Military facilities (Legea nr. 122 din 15 iunie 2011, art. 3, lit. h) are buildings and installations used in training activities or in combat actions of the army, that are under the administration of the Ministry of National Defence/MApN. These include barracks/military bases, military camps, shooting ranges and warehouses, military transportation infrastructure (train stations and railroads, ports, airports, airfields, hangars), as well as landscaping or fortifications. Some of the military facilities are represented by specialised military facilities (DDI-13 din 17 iunie 2022), namely the barracks that provide facilities for strategic leadership, information processing centres or warehouses for explosives, ammunition or toxic chemicals. For these bases, that are established by the Defence Staff/SMAp, due to their strategic importance or existing risks in their use, additional conditions are required for establishing the location, as well as for ensuring access and operation.
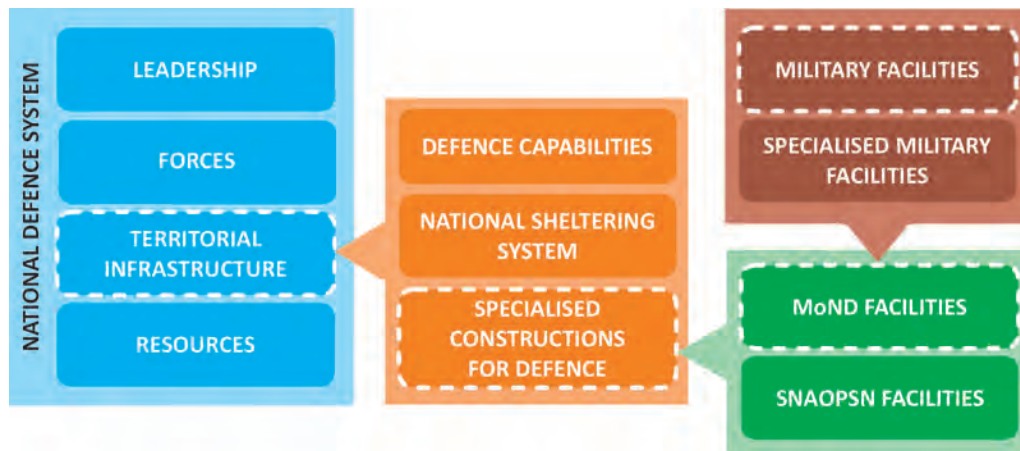

Figure 1: Defence infrastructure components (author's design).

Real estate properties in the military environment are the properties owned by the Ministry of National Defence or those in the public or private domain of the state that are under the ministry's administration. They are referred to as *military barracks/bases/installations* and consist of the land, constructions and facilities intended to provide temporary or permanent facilities for the accommodation, training, and preparation of one or more military units.

Military infrastructure is defined as the assembly of permanent constructions and installations that support military activities. Its development is based on operational requirements, depending on the complexity of the military activities carried out, and real estate investment projects.
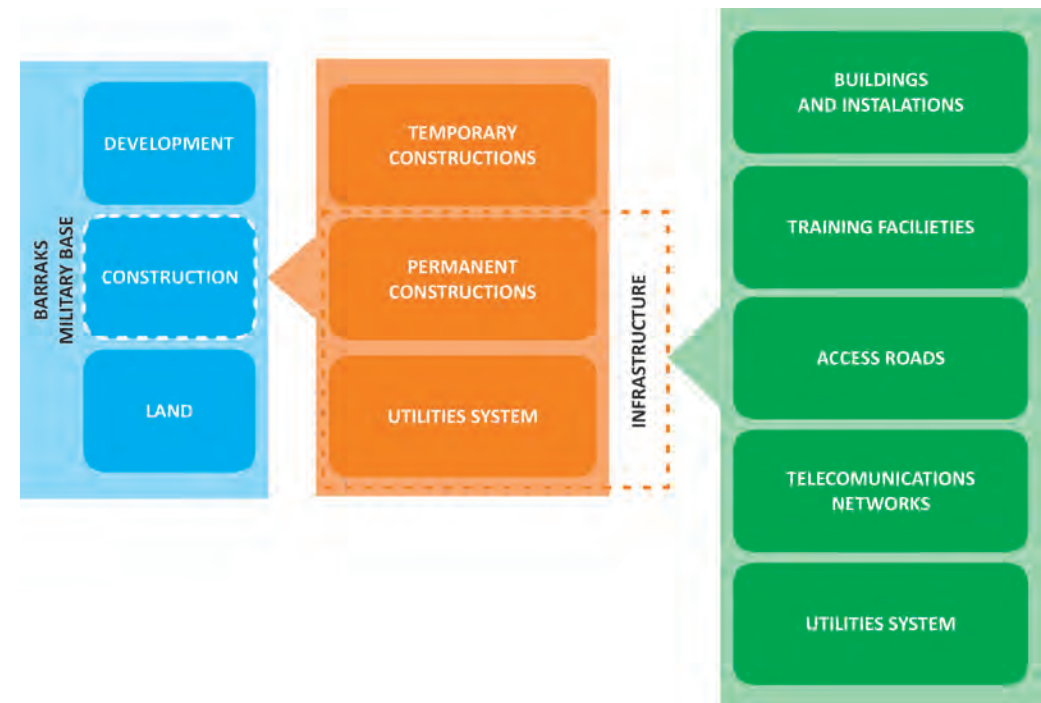

Figure 2: The elements of a military base (author's design).

Doing real estate investments for the military involves a series of stages established by laws and technical regulations that apply at the national level, as well as additional measures specified by orders and provisions specific to the military domain, aimed at ensuring the implementation of an appropriate operational standard. Listing the applicable regulations presents both the stages of building the infrastructure starting from the level of strategic planning to the implementation and use of constructions, as well as the responsibilities that various civil and military institutions have in this process.

The doctrine of the Romanian Armed Forces sets three levels of military activity that also apply to the stages of military infrastructure

development: leadership/directing at the military-strategic level, respectively planning and execution at the operational and tactical levels (Chiriac, 2017). The categorisation into the three levels is based on the established objectives (Lexicon militar, 1994):

- The strategic level is subordinated to national and allied policies, directing/leading the operational and tactical level through an overall conception.
- The operational level, situated between the strategic and tactical levels, refers to the planning and coordination/management of the operations necessary to achieve the established strategic objectives.
- The tactical level is subordinate to the other two levels, involving the integration of tactical actions in an operational and strategic conception.

BUILDING REGULATION AT THE STRATEGIC LEVEL

Territorial Planning

The spatial management of the country's territory is carried out through spatial planning and urban planning activities, based on the *Territorial Development Strategy of Romania* (Legea nr. 350 din 6 iunie 2001, art. 2).

The Territorial Development Strategy of Romania is a document that establishes the long-term directions of territorial development, over a period of 20 years or more, and provides the foundation for regional, national, cross-border, and transnational strategies, policies, and programs. The Ministry of Development, Public Works, and Administration (MDLPA) is responsible for developing this document, under the coordination of the Prime Minister.

Territorial planning is the activity through which all sectoral policies, including defence, are coordinated in an integrated manner. In this sense, the MDLPA develops territorial planning documentation at the national, regional, and local levels, outlining directions for spatial development. For the coordination of defence and territory management activities, the SNAOPSN authorities approve these documents in advance (Ordinul nr. M. 40 din 8 martie 2018, art. 6).

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Defence Planning at the Political and Departmental Levels

The basic document for national defence planning (Legea nr. 203 din 16 iulie 2015) is the Romania's *National Defence Strategy*. This document is presented by the President of Romania for the duration of his mandate and is approved by both Chambers of Parliament. To fulfil the provisions of the Strategy, MApN develops the Defence White Paper (Hotărârea nr. 28/2021 pentru aprobarea Cărţii albe a apărării), which outlines, among other things, the objectives, directions of action and major investment projects for developing the defence infrastructure.

To achieve the objectives set through the national defence policy, based on the *National Defence Strategy*, taking into account the Defence White Paper and considering the security and defence policies of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) and the European Union (EU), MApN designed the *Military Strategy of Romania* (Hotărârea nr. 832 din 11 august 2021).

In order to provide a vision of the defence objectives and resource allocation priorities, based on the *Defence White Paper*, the *Military Strategy of Romania* and the *framework letter regarding the macroeconomic context*, MApN develops the *Defence Planning Guideline* (Directiva de planificare a apărării pentru perioada 2018-2027, 6 februarie 2018)[2]. The planning is divided into 11 major programs, each led by a program director responsible for managing resources to ensure specialised military capabilities. The *Defence Planning Guideline* covers a 10 years period and represents the main basis for harmonising policies, resources and capabilities. Based on this document, each program director establishes the necessary courses of action to achieve specific objectives, including objectives related to the maintenance and development of infrastructure.

Spatial Planning for National Defence

Preparing the territory for national defence (Legea nr. 477 din 12 noiembrie 2003, art. 34) includes the measures taken during peacetime to meet the operational needs of the national defence

In order to provide a vision of the defence objectives and resource allocation priorities, based on the Defence White Paper, the Military Strategy of Romania and the framework letter regarding the macroeconomic context, MApN develops the Defence Planning Guideline. The planning is divided into 11 major programs, each led by a program director responsible for managing resources to ensure specialised military capabilities.

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[2] The Defense Planning Guideline for the period 2018-2027 was approved on 6 February 2018 by the Defense Planning Council.

ROMANIAN MILITARY THINKING

system, to protect citizens, as well as for the protection of material assets of the national heritage.

For the protection of citizens, objectives[3] such as civil shelters, alerting and warning systems, observation posts and command points are considered, while for the protection of goods, warehouses and loading-unloading points are provided.

The objectives set for assuring the operational needs of the defence system (Pigui, 2004) include the necessary works for the military activity, such as fortifications or command points, storage capacities, communication routes, including ports and airports or telecommunication lines, etc.

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These works are carried out by including them in the *Program of objectives for the operational preparation of the territory for defence*. This program is carried out for a period of four years and is updated annually. Revisions are based on proposals submitted by the public institutions with responsibilities in the field of security and are approved by SMAp. For the implementation of the construction works, the projects are included and are given priority in the investment programs of the responsible authorities.

Directing Real Estate Investments at the Strategic Level

Regarding the defence infrastructure, the activities on the strategic level consist of coordinating defence policy with national spatial planning strategies. This is achieved by updating spatial planning documentations with the information related to SNAOPSN objectives and by the SNAOPSN authorities approving these documentations. Directing the operational level is carried out through the *Program of objectives for the operational preparation of the territory for defence*, which includes the investment objectives related to the preparation of the territory for defence, and through the *Defence Planning Guideline*, which ensures the financing of investment programs.

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[3] Civil protection works are carried out in accordance with Legea nr. 481 din 8 noiembrie 2004 privind protecția civilă and Hotărârea nr. 560 din 15 iunie 2005 pentru aprobarea categoriilor de construcții la care este obligatorie realizarea adăposturilor de protecție civilă, precum și a celor la care se amenajează puncte de comandă/Decision no. 560 of 15 June 2005 for the Approval of the Construction Types for which Civil Protection Shelters Are Mandatory, as well as those that Require the Setting Up of Command Posts.
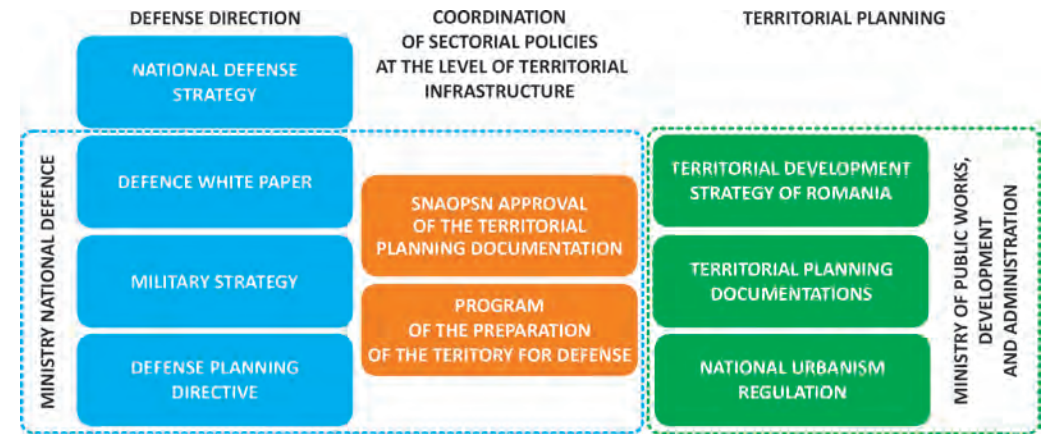
Figure 3: Defense policy coordination at the level of territorial infrastructure (author's design)

BUILDING REGULATION AT THE OPERATIONAL LEVEL

Urban Planning Activity

Urban planning (Legea nr. 350 din 6 iunie 2001, art. 4) represents the operational and normative activity through which the provisions of the territorial development plans are transposed at the level of administrative-territorial units through: the General Urban Plan and its corresponding local regulation, Zonal Urban Plans and their corresponding local regulations and through Detailed Urban Plans. In order to complete the urban planning documentation, the SNAOPSN authorities communicate to the local or county public authorities that are the areas with special destination and the protection zones of the areas with special destination for the objectives under their administration.

To comply with the conditions set out in the urban planning documents and inform the beneficiary about the legal, economic and technical regime concerning the properties and the necessary conditions for the building approvals, an urban planning certificate/ CU is required. The mayor, through the urban planning department led by the chief architect, ensures the development of urban plans for the territory they manage and issues the CU.

For defence-related investments, the CU is issued by the SNAOPSN authorities, based on and in compliance with the internal regulations applicable to specialised facilities (Ordinul nr. M. 40 din 8 martie 2018, art. 6).

Urban planning represents the operational and normative activity through which the provisions of the territorial development plans are transposed at the level of administrative-territorial units through: the General Urban Plan and its corresponding local regulation, Zonal Urban Plans and their corresponding local regulations and through Detailed Urban Plans.

To determine the specific urban planning requirements for the location and coordinate with the local regulations approved by the urban planning documents, technical support may be requested from the local public authorities, which are obliged to provide the requested data within 15 days.

The MApN Approval

In order to protect the real estate assets of the MApN, the construction works for properties located in the vicinity or in the protection zones of specialised military facilities are subject to obtaining the approval of SMAp (Hotărârea nr. 62 din 7 februarie 1996, anexa 1, pct. 4). The Domains and Infrastructure Division, the specialised department of the MApN in the field of property management, approves, at the request of the SMAp, the urban planning and territorial planning documentation for the location of new investments and the development of existing ones (DDI-13 din 17 iunie 2022).

Also, the approval of SMAp is necessary for a series of investment objectives, public or private, in order to analyse the opportunity of their inclusion in the infrastructure of the national defence system, as well as to coordinate new projects within the existing infrastructure.

Planning the Real Estate Investments for Defence

The defence objectives set at strategic level are planned and coordinated through major programs and annual plans (Legea nr. 203 din 16 iulie 2015, art. 9 și 10).

The major programs include the necessary resources and measures for modernisation, equipment, training, and logistical support. They are developed and implemented by the directors of the major programs, based on the resources and objectives outlined in the *Defence Planning Guideline.*

The founding of MApN activities is provided by the state budget and is subject to the regulations provided in *Legea nr. 500/2002 privind finanțele publice*, regarding the credit managers, public investment programs and approval of investment documentation.

The Minister of National Defence is the main credit manager (Legea nr. 346 din 21 iulie 2006, art. 19) and designates, by order, secondary

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and tertiary credit managers (Ib., art. 68) to ensure budget execution. The secondary credit managers are the directors of major program that are responsible for establishing, developing and maintaining capabilities.

The annual investment plans are prepared by the directors of major programs based on the measures outlined in the major programs, the funds allocated from the state budget for the respective year, the budget execution of the previous year and the program indicators.

Real estate programs represent a coherent set of projects or objectives that are carried out over a period of more than one year. DDI, the authority of the MApN that monitors and coordinates real estate investments in all stages of implementation, is responsible, through its subordinate units, for implementing the real estate programs.

Real Estate Investment Planning at the Operational Level

At the operational level, the necessary planning and coordination activities are carried out in order to achieve the strategic objectives. Regarding the real estate investments of the MApN planning is carried out through Investment Programs and Annual Plans. Coordinating new investments with the existing defence infrastructure is achieved through the Urban Planning Certificate and the MApN approval.
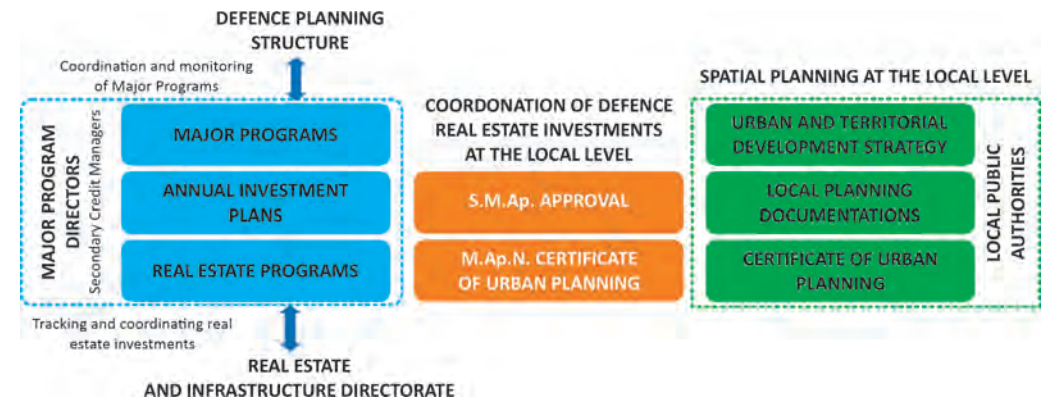

Figure 4: Planning of military real estate investments and their coordination at the local level (author's design)

BUILDING REGULATION AT THE TACTICAL LEVEL

The development and modernisation of real estate is carried out through real estate investment projects. These consist of the development of a new real estate property or the modernisation of an existing infrastructure and are carried out in compliance with the national legal framework regarding the stages of project approval, public procurement, planning application, and the execution of construction works.

The Ministry of Public Works, Development and Administration/ MLPDA (Hotărârea nr. 477 din 16 iunie 2020) is the central public administration authority in the field of constructions, spatial planning, urban planning and architecture and is responsible for ensuring the regulatory framework related to these activities. The regulations issued are mandatory for all real estate investments, public or private, to ensure a corresponding technical standard established at the national level, as well as for coordinating the development of all administrative-territorial units, regardless of their size.

For the real estate investments for national defence, in order to detail the investment implementation procedures and establish a standard regarding the operational requirements, the Ministry of National Defence issues orders and instructions, while the heads of departments in the central structures issue provisions, according to specific competencies (Legea nr. 346 din 21 iulie 2006, art. 40).

The Domains and Infrastructure Division is the specialised structure of the MApN authorised to develop regulations for the administration and development of military real estate (DDI-13 din 17 iunie 2022). Furthermore, DDI, through its subordinate units, is responsible for the implementation of real estate programs. The real estate management system consists of technical structures specialised in the zonal administration of real estate, called Infrastructure Centres, the Centre for Studies and Design of Military Constructions and the Centre for Intervention in Emergency Situations.

Stages of the Real Estate Investment Process

For the real estate investment objectives of the MApN, given the fact that they are carried out from public funds, the measures provided by *Hotărârea Guvernului nr. 907/2016 privind etapele de elaborare și conținutul-cadru al documentațiilor tehnico-economice aferente obiectivelor/proiectelor de investiții finanțate din fonduri publice*[4] shall apply. The stages of development and approval of the documentation are as follows:

- 1st stage: development of the capability requirements and the design theme.
- 2nd stage: preparation of the pre-feasibility study, mandatory for real estate investment objectives whose total estimated total value exceeds the equivalent of 50 million Euros, and the feasibility study or, as the case may be, the approval documentation for the intervention works.
- 3rd stage: development of the project for utility permits and planning applications.
- 4th stage: preparation of the technical project for execution.

For the real estate properties managed by the Ministry of National Defence, the competences for initiating, approving and implementing real estate investment projects are established through military regulations. *Dispoziția șefului Direcției domenii și infrastructuri nr. DDI-13 din 17 iunie 2022 pentru aprobarea Regulamentului proprietății imobiliare în Ministerul Apărării Naționale* details the process of real estate development and establishes responsibilities regarding the management of real estate properties in the MApN.

Projects are initiated by promoting of the Capability Requirements by the administrator of the base in which the investment is implemented, and its approval by the director of program. The design theme is developed within the Military Construction Studies and Projects Center (CSPCM), the specialised technical structure subordinated to the DDI that provides technical and economic documentation for investment projects. After the approval of the Design Theme by the program director and the planning of the necessary public funds, the next step is the analysis of the technical and economic feasibility of the real estate investment. This stage is carried out by CSPCM, using its own specialists or through the acquisition of design services, depending on the priority tasks and the allocation of its own conceptual resources.

The competent authority to approve the technical and economic documentation is the Technical-Economic Council of the Ministry

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[4]   Governmental Decision nr. 907/2016 on the Development Stages and the Framework Content of Technical-Economic Documentations regarding Publicly Funded Investment Objectives/ Projects.

of National Defence. This organisation is regulated by *Ordinul M. 94 din 24 august 2017/Ordin pentru aprobarea Regulamentului privind organizarea și funcționarea Consiliului tehnico-economic al Ministerului Apărării Naționale*[5]. DDI is providing the permanent secretariat and the technical-economic analysis of the documentation.

The Capability Requirements and Feasibility Studies related to investments made from public funds are approved according to the estimated value of the investment by: the Government, for values exceeding 100 million lei, the Ministry of National Defence, for values between 10 and 100 million lei (Legea nr. 500 din 11 iulie 2002, art. 42), and the head of the Domains and Infrastructure Division for values up to 10 million lei.

After the approval of the technical and economic indicators, the implementation stage of the project follows, which includes the development of the technical documentation and its verification by certified personnel, the building permit and the construction of the building approved. This stage is carried out through the Domains and Infrastructure Centres (CDI), the specialised technical structures for the zonal management of real estate under the DDI's authority. For detailing the management activities and responsibilities in carrying out investments, the DDI issued the provisions *DDI-7/2020 Dispoziția șefului Direcției domenii și infrastructuri privind managementul proiectelor de investiții, consolidări sau reparații capitale ce se implementează de structuri subordonate Direcției domenii și infrastructuri*[6] and *A 267/2019 – Atribuțiile managerilor de proiect*[7].

The development of projects and their verification, the control of execution and the management of building works, as well as the Practical Completion certificate are carried out by certified specialists in domains/subdomains and specialties, in accordance to *Legea nr. 10 din 1995 privind calitatea în construcții și a reglementărilor tehnice în construcții*.

For investments of the MApN, the stages of project implementation and the procedure for the Practical Completion certificate are detailed

by *Ordinul nr. 151 din 27 noiembrie 2017 pentru aprobarea Instrucțiunilor privind realizarea obiectivelor de investiții, recepția construcțiilor și stabilirea valorii finale a lucrărilor de construcții, cuprinse în programul de investiții al Ministerului Apărării Naționale* and by *Precizările șefului DDI nr. A 15816/2019 privind recepția lucrărilor de construcții și a instalațiilor aferente acestora, în Ministerul Apărării Naționale*[8]. The activity of checking the practical completion of the construction is the responsibility of CDIs, as delegated investors, and is carried out through the project manager. The committee for this activity includes the Deputy Chief of the DDI, as chairman, and as members: the Deputy Chief of the CDI, the representatives of the Project Coordination and Base Maintenance Office from DDI, the representative of the program director, the representative of the ISC MApN, the base commander of the user military unit and the head of the barracks formation.

Approvals and Permits Specific for the Defence Infrastructure

The technical documentation required for planning applications is prepared in accordance with the content provided in Annex no. 1 of Legea 50/91, based on the approvals and permits obtained and the urban planning certificate specifications. For works related to military objectives, some of the approvals are issued by the authorities within the MApN or, in certain situations, exceptions from obtaining them are provided.

Environmental Impact Assessment

According to *Ordonanța de urgență nr. 195/2005 privind protecția mediului*[9], for projects and activities in military areas, MApN. develops norms and instructions for environmental protection, monitors compliance with these norms by applying sanctions in case of violations and ensures the assessment of the environmental impact through structures certified by the central public authority for environmental protection. In order to exercise the competencies conferred by law, the Minister of Defence issued the following orders: *M. 14/2008 pentru*

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[5] Order M. 94 of 24 August 2017/Order for the Approval of the Regulations on the Ministry of National Defence Technical-Economic Council Organisation and Functioning.

[6] DDI-7/2020 Disposition of the Chief of Domains and Infrastructure Directorate on the Management of Investment, Consolidation or Capital Repairing Projects that are Implemented by Structures under the Subordination of the Domains and Infrastructure Directorate.

[7] A 267/2019 – Project Managers Attributions.

[8] Order no. 151 of 27 November 2017 for the Approval of the Instructions on the Achievement of Investment Objectives, the Reception of Constructions and the Establishment of the Final Value of Construction Works, Included in the Investment Program of the Ministry of National Defence and The Stipulations of the Chief of DDI nr. A 15816/2019 on the Reception of Construction Works and Related Installations, in the Ministry of National Defence.

[9] Emergency Ordinance nr. 195/2005 regarding Environment Protection.

aprobarea Instrucțiunilor privind organizarea și desfășurarea activității de protecție a mediului în Armata României and *M. 13/2000 pentru aprobarea Strategiei de Protecție a Mediului în Armata României*[10].

Regarding the environmental impact assessment for projects and activities in the military areas, according to art. 5 of *Legea nr. 292/2018 privind evaluarea impactului anumitor proiecte publice și private asupra mediului*[11], projects or parts of projects aimed at national defence may be exempted from evaluation. By analysing each case, the national defence authorities together with the central public authority for environmental protection determine whether carrying out the environmental impact assessment procedure would have a negative effect on these objectives. If the evaluation has a negative impact, the competent authority for environmental protection issues a decision exempting the project from the environmental impact assessment procedure.

State Inspectorate for Construction ISC – MApN

According to *Legea 10/95 privind calitatea în construcții*, the State Inspectorate for Construction/ISC exercises state control over the application of provisions in the field of construction. However, for works related to military objectives, this activity is carried out by the internal control structures within the DDI. The roles and responsibilities of DDI in the field of state control of construction quality in the Ministry of National Defence are specified by the *Dispoziția șefului Direcției domenii și infrastructuri nr. DDI-13 din 17 iunie 2022 pentru aprobarea Regulamentului proprietății imobiliare în Ministerul Apărării Naționale*.

For specialised military construction, the ISC approval is issued by the specialised structure within the DDI that is responsible for state control in constructions of the MApN.

Fire Safety Certificate

According to art. 47 para. (1) from *Legea nr. 307/2006 privind apărarea împotriva incendiilor*, in the military units, the fire protection activities are carried out based on the norms approved by the respective structures. According to *Legea nr. 346/2006 din 21 iulie 2006 privind organizarea și funcționarea Ministerului Apărării Naționale*, MApN is responsible for leading fire protection activities for the infrastructure it manages. To exercise the powers conferred by law, the Minister of Defence issued *Ordinul nr. M. 87/2021 pentru aprobarea Normelor de apărare împotriva incendiilor în Ministerul Apărării Naționale*[12], which specifies that the DDI issues the fire safety agreement and the fire safety certificate for specialised military constructions.

Public Health Certificate

The sanitary authorisation represents a mandatory procedure for facilities that could cause illness to the population and is issued according to *Ordinul nr. 1030/2009 privind aprobarea procedurilor de reglementare sanitară pentru proiectele de amplasare, amenajare, construire și pentru funcționarea obiectivelor ce desfășoară activități cu risc pentru starea de sănătate a populației*. The provisions of the order are implemented by the specialised departments within the Ministry of Health, and in the case of defence investments, by the medical services within the military health network of the MApN (Ordinul nr. 1030/2009, art. 21).

According to *Ordinul nr. M. 110/2009 pentru aprobarea Instrucțiunilor privind asistența medicală și farmaceutică în Ministerul Apărării Naționale pe timp de pace*[13], the health certificate and authorisation are carried out by the military units with preventive medicine activity.

Building Permit

The execution of construction works is permitted based on the building or demolition permit issued under the conditions of *Legea 50/91 privind autorizarea executării lucrărilor de construcții*. This law specifies the stages for approving construction works, as well as the technical documentation required for obtaining a building permit.

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[10] M. 14/2008 for the Approval of the Instructions regarding the Organisation and Implementation of the Environmental Protection Activity in the Romanian Armed Forces and M. 13/2000 for the Approval of the Environmental Protection Strategy in the Romanian Armed Forces.

[11] Law nr. 292/2018 regarding the Assessment of the Impact of Certain Public and Private Projects on the Environment.

[12] Order nr. M. 87/2021 on the Approval of the Fire Protection Rules in the Ministry of National Defense.

[13] Order nr. M. 110/2009 for the Approval of the Instructions on Medical and Pharmaceutical Assistance in the Ministry of National Defense in Peacetime.

ROMANIAN
MILITARY
THINKING

*The
implementation
of approved real
estate projects
is carried out
through the
procurement
of design
services and
execution works,
separately or
as a package.
Legea nr.
98/2016 privind
achizițiile publice
regulates the
procedures
for awarding
and executing
the public
procurement
contract,
specifying
the rules for
conducting the
procedures.
This law does
not apply to
contracts in the
field of defence
or national
security where
the contracting
authority is
required to
award them by
an international
agreement or
understanding.*

The constructions, landscaping and installations made in order to support the specific activity of the institutions in the field of defence are referred to, under the law, as *specialised military constructions* (Legea nr. 50/91, anexa nr. 2) or constructions with special characteristics [Ib., art. 1, paragraph (3) and art. 43]. For these works, the building permit is issued by the institutions of SNAOPSN, not by local authorities, in accordance with *Ordinul nr. M. 40/2018 pentru aprobarea Procedurii comune privind autorizarea executării lucrărilor de construcții cu caracter special*.

The planning applications is only possible based on a real right over the building site. Exceptions are made for construction works carried out under treaties/agreements to which Romania is a party, regulated by the implementation memoranda of the respective treaties, provided that the technical documentation is approved in accordance with the current legislation.

Public Procurement

The implementation of approved real estate projects is carried out through the procurement of design services and execution works, separately or as a package. *Legea nr. 98/2016 privind achizițiile publice*[14] regulates the procedures for awarding and executing the public procurement contract, specifying the rules for conducting the procedures. This law does not apply to contracts in the field of defence or national security where the contracting authority is required to award them by an international agreement or understanding.

Moreover, the law does not apply to contracts in the fields of defence and national security to the extent that the protection of the confidential nature of the information that needs to be made available to the participants cannot be guaranteed through the procedures. For these situations, the provisions of the *Ordonanța de urgență a Guvernului nr. 114/2011 privind atribuirea anumitor contracte de achiziții publice în domeniile apărării și securității*[15] apply.

In addition to these regulations, for detailing procurement responsibilities in MApN the following ministerial orders are issued: *M. 216/2018 pentru aprobarea Îndrumarului privind încadrarea*

cheltuielilor Ministerului Apărării Naționale pe articolele și alineatele clasificației economice and *M. 31/2008 Competențele de achiziție a produselor, serviciilor și lucrărilor în cadrul Ministerului Apărării Naționale*[16].

In order to procure design services and related execution works for the real estate investments, *Hotărârea Guvernului nr. 1/2018 pentru aprobarea condițiilor generale și specifice pentru anumite categorii de contracte de achiziție aferente obiectivelor de investiții finanțate din fonduri publice*[17] specifies as mandatory a series of provisions regarding the monitoring and completion of works. These measures are mandatory for investments whose estimated value is equal to or greater than 26,093,012 lei[18], but the contracting authorities may use this agreement model also for projects whose estimated value is lower than the mentioned threshold.

Technical Regulations for Constructions

The technical regulations for constructions are organised in 29 chapters that include provisions regarding the design and execution of constructions, quality control and completion of works, energy performance of buildings, fire safety or the use and repair of building equipment. The technical regulations are approved by the Minister of Regional Development and Public Administration and are mandatory for all public or private works, in order to ensure the requirements applicable to constructions and a corresponding quality standard.

For the constructions of the MApN, the national technical regulations are supplemented with *Ordinul nr. M. 87/2021 pentru aprobarea Normelor de apărare împotriva incendiilor în Ministerul Apărării Naționale*, which present mandatory fire safety measures for the design of specialised military buildings, with *Dispoziția șefului Direcției domenii și infrastructuri nr. DDI-13 din 17 iunie 2022 pentru aprobarea Regulamentului proprietății imobiliare în Ministerul Apărării Naționale* and *Ordinul nr. 151 din 27 noiembrie 2017 pentru*

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and Public
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the requirements
applicable to
constructions
and a
corresponding
quality standard.*

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[14] Law nr. 98/2016 on Public Acquisitions.
[15] Emergency Government Ordinance nr. 114/2011 on the Attribution of Certain Public Procurement Contracts in the Fields of Defence and Security.

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[16] M. 216/2018 for the Approval of the Guideline on the Classification of the Ministry of National Defense Expenses on Economic Classification Articles and Paragraphs and M. 31/2008 Competences for the Purchase of Products, Services and Works within the Ministry of National Defense.
[17] Government Decision nr. 1/2018 for the Approval of General and Specific Terms for Certain Categories of Purchase Contracts related to Investment Objectives Financed from Public Funds.
[18] The value threshold provided by art. 7 para. (1) lit. a) from Legea nr. 98/2016 privind achizițiile publice.

aprobarea Instrucțiunilor privind realizarea obiectivelor de investiții, recepția construcțiilor şi stabilirea valorii finale a lucrărilor de construcții, cuprinse în programul de investiții al Ministerului Apărării Naționale, which details the procedures for quality verification and practical completion of the building, repairs, maintenance and post-use activities of constructions.

Regarding energy performance, a series of exceptions apply to defence facilities. According to article 6, paragraph (6), of *Legea nr. 121 din 18 iulie 2014 privind eficiența energetică*[19], the renovation of national defence facilities is exempted from the obligation to comply with the energy performance requirements provided by *Legea nr. 372/2005 privind performanța energetică a clădirilor*[20]. For the defence investments, the obligation to purchase only products, services or buildings with high-energy performance applies to the extent that they do not create a conflict in the performance of military activities.

Military Specifications for the Defence Infrastructure

Military infrastructure is developed in accordance with military orders and regulations that establish mandatory minimum requirements from a functional point of view, so that constructions meet their intended purposes. In the field of real estate, the Domains and Infrastructure Division is the specialised structure of the Ministry of National Defence authorised to develop specific regulations for the management and development of military real estate. The main provisions issued in this regard are: *Dispoziția șefului Direcției domenii și infrastructuri nr. DDI-13 din 17.06.2022 pentru aprobarea Regulamentului proprietății imobiliare în MApN,* which presents the elements of real estate and their fundamental characteristics, and the *Dispoziția șefului Direcției domenii și infrastructuri nr. DDI-12 din 14.04.2022 pentru aprobarea Normelor tehnice de domenii și infrastructuri*[21], which presents the method of calculating the area of land and interior spaces required for military units, the provision of furniture, equipment, household inventory items and accommodation materials, ensuring the necessary supply of water, electricity, cleaning materials, and other fixed assets related to construction and accommodation.

Specifications regarding the infrastructure conditions can also be found in orders and provisions regarding other military activities, besides construction, such as *Regulamentul de ordine interioară în unitate* or *Regulamentul serviciului interior*[22]. Both the representatives of the user unit through the Operational Requirements and the CSPCM specialists involved in the elaboration of the Design Theme must know and include in the technical documentation all the specifications from military regulations regarding the infrastructure.

Real Estate Investments at the Tactical Level

For the initiation of investments, the beneficiary unit promotes the Capability Requirements stating the necessity and opportunity of the construction works. After its approval and budgeting, CSPCM carries out the Design Theme and then the Feasibility Study. For establishing technical solutions, both the technical regulations in construction, with the exceptions specified for specialised military facilities, and the military orders and dispositions related to the infrastructure, are applied. The fire safety certificate and the building inspection approval are issued by the specialised offices within the DDI, while the public health certificate is issued by the military hospitals. Depending on the investment, the project may be exempted from the environmental impact analysis.

The approval of the technical and economic indicators is carried out by the Technical-Economic Council of the Ministry of Defence (CTE MApN), and the approval of the Capability Requirements and Feasibility Study/Documentation for approval of the intervention works is carried out, depending on the value estimated of the projects, by the head of the DDI, the minister of defence or the government. The issuing the CU and building permit for construction or demolition works is carried out by the DDI, through its specialized structures.

The procurement of the technical project and the execution works is the responsibility of the CDIs, as delegated investors. The procurement is carried out based on *Legea nr. 98/2016 privind achizițiile publice* or, in the case of special military objectives, of *Ordonanța 114/2011 privind atribuirea anumitor contracte de achiziții publice în domeniile apărării și securității.*

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[19] Law nr. 121 of 18 July 2014 on Energy Efficiency.
[20] Law nr. 372/2005 on Building Energy Efficiency.
[21] Disposition of the Chief of the Domains and Infrastructures Directorate nr. DDI-12 of 14.04.2022 for the Approval of the Technical Norms of Domains and infrastructures.

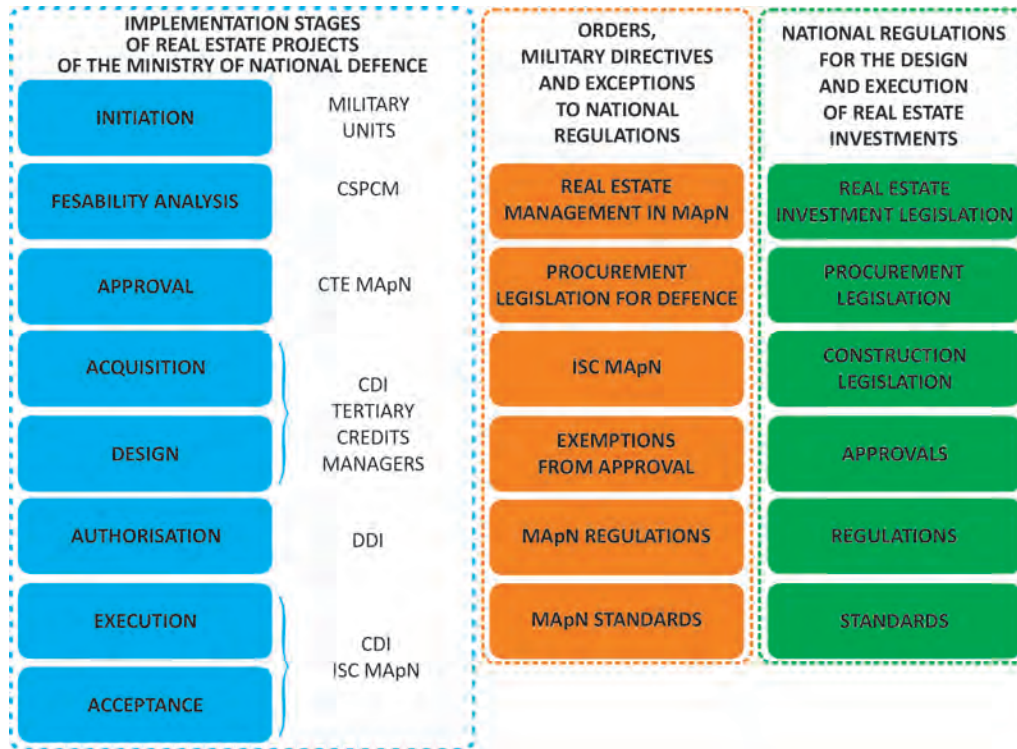[22] Internal Order Regulation in the Unit or Internal Service Regulation.

Figure 5: Implementation of real estate investments of the Ministry of National Defense (author's design)

The conditions for monitoring and billing the works are specified in *H.G. 1/2018 pentru aprobarea condiţiilor generale şi specifice pentru anumite categorii de contracte de achiziţie aferente obiectivelor de investiţii finanţate din fonduri publice.* The practical completion of projects involves structures within the DDI and is carried out based on the provisions of the head of the DDI.

In order to ensure quality within investments, in addition to the duties established at the national level for the specialists involved, the responsibilities of the project managers are detailed by provisions of the head of the DDI.

CONCLUSIONS

Considering the large number of laws, orders, and provisions applicable to the implementation of military infrastructure projects, following the research carried out, it appears opportune to create a *Military Construction Code* that details the regulation of the construction process and the responsibilities of the parties involved.

Furthermore, since numerous specifications regarding the military infrastructure are found in orders and provisions of other branches besides construction, in order to ensure the implementation of the corresponding operational standard in real estate projects, it is necessary to create a *Military Construction Regulation* that brings together all the specifications related to infrastructure from military orders and provisions, as well as relevant technical regulations from the national legislation. This regulation should consider aspects related to the design of the buildings such as location, materials used, type and size of spaces, as well as equipment necessary for the military activity, in order to ensure the efficiency and safety of the personnel involved.

In conclusion, we believe that the introduction of a dedicated code and regulation for military construction could contribute to the efficiency of military operations, ensuring the productivity and safety of military personnel, as well as the economy of resources.

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ROMANIAN MILITARY THINKING

DIGITAL MINDSET IN EDUCATION
– SECURITY EDUCATION –

Andreea LOSEKAMM

Management Expert, US Department of State,
General Consulate in Frankfurt, Germany

Safety and the protection of freedoms constitute key challenges the education system is currently facing in the context of digitalization, challenges that require the promotion of a more elaborate definition of digital democracy correlated with concerns related to human rights, development inequality depending on access to education, responsibility and, last but not least, building consensus in highly diverse environments. Therefore, security as a fundamental value of democratic societies requires a reassessment in relation to the principles promoted by political institutions – inclusion, responsibility and transparency –, debatable against the background of political polarization and the emergence of new digital technologies. The present article is not intended to formulate a general theory on how the digitalization of education and democracy relate or are mutually exclusive. It deals with more or less contingent situations and raises additional – including empirical – questions about the role that digitalization in the education system can have for the state of democracy, regardless of the level of understanding. The intent is directed to the concrete mode in which digitalization can be beneficial or inadequate for democracy, contributing to a better understanding of the challenges. The reader can translate it into own environment, linking personal reading to specific democratic processes, including the level and type of digital activity.

Keywords: education system; digitalization; cyber security; democracy; critical infrastructures;

DEVELOPMENT EXPLAINED IN BINARY NUMERIC CODES

The digital world is divided into clear, secure and rational structures, consisting of series of sequences of numbers – finally binary numeric codes. Digitalization itself is basically nothing more than the representation and storage of information, which results in the expression of actions and values in codes. However, the impact of digital transformation is not simplified by bringing it to a common denominator. The main values of democracy – freedom, equality, dignity, solidarity, the rule of law – cannot be transposed into numerological sequences. In the form of codes, they are equally applicable to both physical and virtual reality, and the measures to be implemented in the field of cybersecurity must fully comply with these principles.

The reconfiguration of the relationship between security and democracy is a priority in the national efforts to stabilize the democratic crisis in the education system invoked by the inability of some governments to provide a responsible and adaptive system in line with digital transformation. The study of safe and adaptive digitalization varies, but does not go beyond the concept of regionalism or globalization, since inclusion is essentially due to these concepts. In understanding the perceptions of security towards the complexity of the technological process, it is necessary to examine this fundamental reconfiguration over two distinct perspectives: the readjustment and redesign of (democratic) security, encompassing the different and sometimes contradictory ways in which democratic forms of security governance change.

EDUCATION – DEMOCRACY – SECURITY BALANCE

The topic of digital democratization is a complex one, related to different concepts such as security, participation, adaptation and last but not least transformation. Starting from these principles, the article offers a concept of digital democracy as a combination of dimensions: information – participation – transformation, dimensions taken from the foundation of education.

The study of safe and adaptive digitalization varies, but does not go beyond the concept of regionalism or globalization, since inclusion is essentially due to these concepts. In understanding the perceptions of security towards the complexity of the technological process, it is necessary to examine this fundamental reconfiguration over two distinct perspectives: the readjustment and redesign of (democratic) security, encompassing the different and sometimes contradictory ways in which democratic forms of security governance change.

Education is a basic need for every human being, and digital education is the current trend and necessity. Not unpredictable at all, this topic is often addressed in connection with data processing and involves concerns about privacy, increasing inequality, risk of stigmatization and discrimination (whether it is deliberate or simply an unintentional consequence). Given the enormous costs of creating and maintaining courses on online platforms, it is surprising that security is not yet considered a major problem by the authorities, including teachers and students. Unlike traditional research in the field of security, which has largely been determined by military requirements to impose secrecy, in the field of e-learning it is not the information itself that must be protected against unauthorized access, but the way in which it is presented. In most cases, the knowledge contained in e-learning programmes is more or less accessible; therefore, it is not the information itself that is the destabilizing element of security, but the way used to transmit it.

In a secure learning environment, users should not be worried about the threats specific to learning platforms and electronic communication in general. A secure learning platform should incorporate aspects of security so that most processes can be transparent to the teacher and the student. However, ensuring a completely secure system is a too ambitious goal, because nothing can ever be completely secure and – at the same time – still remains usable. Therefore, the system should allow the user to decide upon the compromise between utility and security.

INFORMATION SECURITY VULNERABILITIES

For the development of operational plans, the combination of threats, vulnerabilities and their effects must be assessed in order to identify important trends and decide whether efforts should be made to eliminate or reduce threat and vulnerability capabilities and to assess, coordinate and eliminate conflicts of all cyberspace operations (Locke, Gallagher, 2011, p. 1).

Looking at the democratic system from the perspective of increasing vulnerabilities, we find that the new security model must be – today more than ever – responsive to global challenges and able to cope with an increasingly complex and digital political environment. The rise in populism, increasingly radical mentalities, declining trust in political

institutions and increased expectations of political participation add additional challenges to the established processes and structures of liberal democracies. While digital transformation will not be the only answer to these challenges, it will be the key for democratic institutions and political stakeholders to act decisively in an increasingly innovative world.

The current context displays a large array of examples of resistance to innovation or differential adaptation of new technologies (Frey, 2019, p. 59). The personalization of a social system is not done by itself. Participation must be personalized; each group requires a different approach, a different language and a different working method (European Union Agency for Network and Information Security/ENISA, 2015). The opportunities that digitalization offers for democratization are far from being fully exploited because technological change is a profound change: an often contested political process, the outcome of which depends not only on the technologies themselves, but also on how countries react to them (Schaefer, Coopersmith, 2018).

From the perspective of the political sphere, digitalization is seen mainly as a threat to democratic discourse and not as an opportunity. Bogdan Aurescu himself, in his capacity as Minister of Foreign Affairs, declared on the occasion of the celebration of the International Day of Democracy (2021) that the threats to democratic regimes have transcended the borders of a physical nature, spreading in the virtual world (*Bursa*, 2021).

A state must develop a comprehensive information security policy that encompasses all the necessary areas and critical cybersecurity functions within the institutions. The focus of policy documentation must be technical, physical, and administrative.

NOTIONS AND CONCEPTS OF INFORMATION SECURITY

The notion of IT or cyber security is defined as *"the state of normality resulting from the application of a set of proactive and reactive measures ensuring the confidentiality, integrity, availability, authenticity and non-re-confirmation of electronic information, public or private resources and services in cyberspace"* (ENISA, 2022). Information security is the protection of information against threats, implemented to ensure the continuity of the information flow. The Cyber Security Challenge Germany/CSCG recommended, in 2015,

that the European Commission should harmonize the use of the key terms *"cybersecurity", "NIS"* and *"cybercrime"* across the EU, based on existing definitions. Currently, official communications use all three terms without distinction between them, which risks being interpreted differently in different EU Member States (or languages). The CSCG also recommended the establishment and implementation of an appropriate governance model for the three areas, with a particular focus on avoiding *"silo work"*[1] on topics that are inherently associated (CNRISC, 2018).

By restricting the general context of discussions on cybersecurity at national level, we note the importance of conceptually separating the main directions of action: cyber defence, cybercrime, national security, critical infrastructures and emergency situations, international cyber diplomacy and Internet governance. There is a need to set out very clearly the roles and levels of accountability for each responsible individual national institution.

According to ISO (ISO 38500[2]), governance specifies the accountability framework and provides oversight to ensure that risks are adequately mitigated while management ensures that controls are in place to mitigate risks. Management recommends security strategies. Governance ensures that security strategies are aligned with business goals and compliant with regulations. Information security governance is defined as *"establishing and maintaining the control environment for managing risks related to the confidentiality, integrity and availability of information to support processes and systems"* (Moulton, Coles, 2003, pp. 580-594). From another point of view, it is considered an integral part of governance that involves the implementation of governance concepts and principles regarding information security issues (Abu-Musa, 2010, pp. 226-276). Information security governance,

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[1] *"Silo work"* means operating in a kind of bubble – on your own or as part of an insular team or department. Although the historical definition of a silo is a container (traditionally used on farms for storing grain or cattle food), the word also has a more abstract meaning today. It is often employed as a metaphor for groups of people (e.g., a team is a *"container"* of colleagues) who work independently from other groups. According to Dr. Gillian Tett, an anthropologist turned financial journalist, *"silos are cultural phenomena, which arise out of the systems we use to classify and organize the world"*, https://www.ideagen.com/thought-leadership/blog/working-in-silos", retrieved on 11 February 2023 (ed. note) .

[2] ISO/IEC 38500:2015 – *Information technology. Governance of IT for the organization* – applies to the governance of the organization's current and future use of IT including management processes and decisions related to the current and future use of IT, https://www.iso.org/standard/62816.html, retrieved on 28 February 2023 (ed. note).

in essence, encompasses good risk management, robust reporting control, testing, training and last but not least constant responsibility. It provides strategic direction for cybersecurity activities and ensures the achievement of nationally established cybersecurity objectives.

A good process of governing information security can transform an institution and generate one or more of the following cybersecurity benefits: (1) structured, focused, and prioritized allocation of time, economic resources and efforts; (2) compliance with information security policies; (3) better predictability and less uncertainty; (4) decision-making that is based on a clear structure; (5) a consolidated position when faced with legal consequences; (6) clear responsibility of the actors involved and better protection of information.

In order to help implement good information security governance, a robust core framework is essential to support and associate perfectly with the objectives of democracy. A cybersecurity framework gives states the ability to protect themselves from evolving cyber threats. The main objective of a cybersecurity framework includes: (1) harmonizing cybersecurity approaches and creating a common language; (2) setting the optimal level of cybersecurity adapted to the environment and specific needs; (3) allocating a sufficient cybersecurity budget for the implementation of the framework; (4) efficient exchange of knowledge about cyber risks.

According to the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), information security governance involves establishing and maintaining a framework that provides assurance that information security strategies are aligned and support governance objectives, are consistent with applicable laws and regulations by complying with internal policies and policies, and controls and provides responsibility sharing, all in an effort to manage risk. This framework comprises five elements: it identifies, protects, detects, responds, recovers.

The structure of the simplified security concept has three levels (Tîrziu, 2015, pp. 121-122): (1) Physical security consisting in preventing, detecting and limiting direct access to information. At the moment, information destruction due to the vulnerability of the physical security level is considered to represent the greatest vulnerability. (2) Logical security represented by the totality of the methods that ensure the control over the access to the resources and services of the system.

(3) Legal certainty is the level constituted by a collection of national laws intended to regulate the act of violating the first two levels of security mentioned above and to establish criminal sanctions for those acts (Locke, Gallagher, p. 1).

TECHNOLOGICAL SETTING
IN ROMANIAN EDUCATION

The objectives of e-learning are concerned with providing hybrid teaching on a large scale, and the main goal in close connection with security is to ensure the availability and integrity of information. E-learning is the implementation of technology to support the learning process, through which knowledge or information can be accessed using communication technology. The learning process can be continuous, provided that the availability of the content exists online. Although the long-term consequences of economic, social and political developments are too unpredictable, a speculative topic, the first effects of the technological setting on the Romanian educational landscape have been noticeable for some time. Society, culture and education are equally augmented and affected by the ongoing digitalization, thus having a bivalent influence on the development of knowledge and political and social structures participation.

The year 2020 marked the beginning of the pandemic of the Sars-COV-2 virus and the disease associated with Covid-19. At the same time, the need to reconfigure the approach practices in the education system was brought to the fore, through: lack of predictability; a heterogeneous school network with a strong digital divide between schools; insufficiently developed digital skills for the efficient organization of the teaching process in the online environment; reduced access to technology and reduced internet connectivity; reduced possibilities for families to provide support to beneficiaries of education, children, for participation in online lessons (Smart-Edu, 2020). The abrupt shift from traditional face-to-face interaction to the online environment soon showed that the future of education involves emerging technology and that teaching, learning and digitalization cannot be discussed disparately. In this context, the education system has undergone revolutionary changes, using the Darwinian phrase *"neither the strongest species, nor the most intelligent, but the most easily adaptable will survive"*.

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However, a standard digitalization strategy has not yet been developed. The fundamental approach lies in identifying solutions for the transfer of knowledge at a global level; and adaptive methods geared towards uniform inclusion. The transfer of practices and methods between institutions at any level is considered a complex problem that requires the engagement of all resources. Understanding this transfer provides a necessary and sufficient foundation in managing development as it can support complex management systems to become innovative and build dynamic capabilities. The transfer of other models of knowledge management is therefore imperative for addressing topics such as anticipation systems, for assessing the risks to the security of using the technology with and for students.

In relation to the diffusion of the social security culture, the emergence of digital democratisation practices and models calls for emerging and integrable transparency for the stages of institutional adaptation. Next, such a solution involves both adapting the legislation (adapting the security and information environment) and a well-defined strategy (adapting the security and information organization).

MAIN CHALLENGES, PRIORITIES
AND COURSES OF ACTION

The **key challenges** therefore remain the same: accessibility, inclusion, the acquisition of digital skills and, last but not least, security for all actors involved. The most important position remains that of the human being. The improvement of software products, their availability and the education system in the field of introduction and use of information technology is thus a dominant feature in the development of the management (but also of other) current processes. Therefore, how can the Romanian education system cope with the security risks related to the digital revolution without jeopardizing the fundamental democratic values? How inclusive is the security and cooperation dialogue at the governmental and institutional level? And finally, what are the mechanisms by which a responsible digitalization is being reconstructed?

The most common solution in such contexts is the forced development of new perspectives. The source of this paradox derives from the concept of digital democracy as a combination of dimensions: information, security, participation, and transformation. The call

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is made towards an image of digitalization as a process that goes beyond previous analogical processes, presenting alternative paths to implementing and seizing the opportunities of responsible digital democracy by readjusting and redesigning mechanisms. Starting from the patterns of interaction between the Romanian educational institutions and the learning environment at international level, the paper proposes as a sustainable solution to innovation the idea of defining the governance of information security.

A new theoretical perspective that drifts into an adaptive strategy of knowledge management, without excluding the risks involved, is required. Adapting complex systems to shape themselves to current models imperatively requires an adaptive plan. The method will determine which structure within this equation is subject to change and what structural strategies need to be applied so that the structure and the whole system can fit better into the social environment. The plan aims to create such new directions aimed at improving the performance of participatory resources and eliminating threats to the democracies under review.

Priorities and courses of action. One can say that the use of technology in education is not only a trend or an influence on educational processes. In the current circumstances, the approach is a necessity for shaping the future of students by acquiring specific capabilities and skills. In anticipation for this need to respond punctually to the challenges listed above, the clear identification of priorities is a must. Only in this way can directions of action be anchored in initiatives, measures and programmes that support the role of digital technology in the development of education and training systems.

Smart Edu for Modern, Accessible School, based on Digital Resources and Technologies, inspired by the Strategy on the digitalization of education in Romania proposes the following priorities: accessibility, connectivity, community, digital educational ecosystem, innovation, sustainability (Smart-Edu, 2020).

Such an approach is required to be correlated with the stage of implementing an action plan and, most likely, coincides with the preparation stage of the normative and legislative framework that supports the responsible and safe digitalization in the Romanian education.

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CONCLUSIONS

In this article, information about technology and security in the education system has been presented in terms of a research agenda. We have highlighted that the security of the education institution requires a substantial contribution to research and development activities. The interactive reconfiguration of the technical and social infrastructures of the contemporary society, examined in their socio-technical educational context, comes in line with the dynamics of evolutions and trends at global level: information, the most important resource.

Security behaviour is correlated with the use of technology and the culture of information security in schools. In educational environments, the problem of user security behaviour is seen as a multidimensional phenomenon combined with the use of technology, learning, communication and teaching. Thus, theoretical commitments to understanding the culture of information security should be analysed based on concrete practices and interactions during the use of e-learning. Awareness of information security is of paramount importance, because it can help us identify potential threats before they occur and at the same time apply measures to support responsible and secure digitalization over time. Referring to Romania's objectives in the process of developing information education and implementing electronic education programmes, it is found that steps are still needed to ensure all resources and an integrated framework for access to a quality education in the digital age. The development of a national programme based on the milestones drawn by the Strategy on the digitalization of education in Romania meant to ensure the elaboration and implementation of concrete cyber security projects is a priority.

The lack of a unitary approach to initiatives, measures and programmes aligned with the current context of information security issues represents a risk factor for ensuring the confidentiality of information and the security of the components of the information system of the institutions. Compromising information security can lead to damaging the credibility of the public institution, as well as to fraud or data destruction, disclosure of confidential information etc. The phenomenon of cybercrime is, by its nature, rapidly developing, transnationally, thus without borders. Depending on the type of vulnerability, the protection methods specific to today's information

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technology are varied. The solutions given by the courses of action represent only the start in achieving more and more elaborate, performant security standards and technologies, making it increasingly difficult to exploit the vulnerabilities of a technological nature.

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THE 1929 ROMANIAN NAVY PROCUREMENT PLAN

Dan-Dragoș SICHIGEA, PhD

Chief of Section – the Romanian Naval Museum, Constanța

After the partial implementation of the procurement program for 1926-1927, the command structures of the Romanian Navy worked diligently to promote some naval procurement projects to meet the defence needs of the maritime coasts, in particular. The next such plan from a chronological point of view was drafted in 1929. It focused, among other things, on building bases to accommodate the forces of the Sea Division, one somewhere around Constanța, and the second one at the mouth of the Danube.

Concretely, in 1929, the ship requirement was modified somewhat compared to the one planned in 1924, in the sense that it started from the need to have four destroyers available at any time, in other words, there had to be eight such units in the equipment, as some would inevitably have been under repair and others needed for reconnaissance missions. To support an ultimate collision with larger enemy ships, the Romanian Navy wanted at least one fast cruiser.

However, the Romanian Navy did not receive any new ships until close to the outbreak of the Second World War, if we do not take into consideration the submarine "Delfinul", commissioned in 1926.

Nevertheless, we consider that the different points of view of naval specialists, concentrated in the 1929 naval plan, were valuable in terms of the crystallisation of some options of unitary acquisitions in the following decade, when the worsening of the international situation required the revision of Romania's naval policy.

Keywords: Military Navy; General Inspectorate of the Navy; cruiser; destroyer; Romanian fleet;

STRATEGIC IMPERATIVES FOR THE NEW PROGRAM

In the period from 1924 to 1929, there were many studies on the best structure for the Romanian fleet. While they did not change the basic structure adopted in the naval plans of 1921 and 1924, they added new information from the analysis of similar fleets of comparable states (Isbășescu, 1928).

To prevent incidents like that of Tatarbunar in 1924, the Inspectorate General of the Navy wanted to prevent any Soviet attempts to land on the coast of Bugeac. After a training trip of the members of the General Staff of the Navy in June 1928, many lessons were learned about the maritime defence of the coasts and the Danube Delta, which was the aim of this trip. For example, it was determined that the most vulnerable area was that of Gibrieni on the southern coast of Basarabia in the event of a large-scale Soviet landing operation. Another area at risk, which could only be considered for a diversionary landing attack, was Balabanca, south of Gibrieni, but also in the Tatarbunar area (AMNR, file 512/1928, p. 23).

These conclusions indicated that the Romanian navy, although vastly outnumbered by the Soviets, was nevertheless capable of preventing an enemy landing on the seacoast. The Soviet High Command was thus aware that it had to eliminate the threat posed by the Romanian fleet before attempting a landing. Since the Soviet submarines could not operate in the waters of Basarabia because of the shallows there, the Romanian Navy needed other early warning systems, namely fast small ships and seaplanes.

These new concepts did not change the main reasons for the programme established by the Inspectorate General of the Navy, which opted for a balanced navy, but there were some nuances to be taken into account. As for the destroyers, 8 of them were considered the minimum required, 4 for pursuing enemy lines of communication and defending the coast, 2 as reserves and another 2 for protecting coastal bases and their own inner lines. They were to be supplemented

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by two light cruisers capable of taking on the Soviet cruisers. As for the submarines, at least six units were considered necessary to properly monitor the movements of the enemy fleet, survey routes and attack enemy convoys. The reconnaissance system had to be supplemented by seaplanes. Although the chapters on coastal defence and naval air forces were only briefly mentioned, it was noted that coastal defence had to be able to engage enemy ships at a range of 20-30 km, which meant that 152-203 mm guns were needed. Of course, the coastal defence had to be supplemented by other detection and reconnaissance elements, such as searchlights, direction finding and acoustic detection devices, etc. The last defence element, at least when it came to the Black Sea, was sea mines. The Romanian Navy needed about 2000 mines for the sea barricades (Ibid.).

In 1929, the Inspectorate General of the Navy submitted several reports to the Ministry of War on the status of the implementation of the naval programme, and some changes and adjustments were made to the new economic and political context of the country. In a 1929 memorandum addressed to the War Department, entitled *"Explanatory Memorandum for Our Naval Programme"*, the then Commander of the Navy, the Inspector General of the Navy, Vice Admiral Scodrea, took stock of the naval programme to date and drew some conclusions about the measures needed to achieve a minimum standard of efficiency that seemed achievable both internally and externally in the new situation (Rohart, 2018, p. 318). It was in fact a reconsideration of various factors, be they geostrategic, political, etc., that had serious implications for the naval programme. Some of the ideas analysed were the same as when the naval programme was developed in 1924, such as the USSR being the main adversary of the navy in the Black Sea, but other features that led to the earlier conclusions were different and the new analysis concluded that the equipment plan had to be divided into tranches for a maximum of 12 years and, on the other hand, that it was necessary to increase the combat power of the navy, both on the Danube and in the Black Sea (Rîşnoveanu, 2011, pp. 168-169).

The tasks of the Romanian Navy remained essentially the same, i.e. the protection of its own lines of communication and the cutting of enemy lines, as well as the defence of maritime and riverine borders (AMNR, file 834/1931-1932, p. 937). In the years preceding the 1929

In a 1929 memorandum addressed to the War Department, entitled "Explanatory Memorandum for Our Naval Programme", the then Commander of the Navy, the Inspector General of the Navy, Vice Admiral Scodrea, took stock of the naval programme to date and drew some conclusions about the measures needed to achieve a minimum standard of efficiency that seemed achievable both internally and externally in the new situation.

Naval Development Plan, studies raised the problem of the small size of the fleet, which, even on a superficial analysis, was insufficient to guarantee the security conditions of the country's territorial waters (Bălescu, 1928, p. 9). According to some authors, the strength of a naval force depended on two factors: mass, i.e. the material strength of the naval units, and mobility, which is more difficult to explain but broadly concerns the speed and autonomy of ships and their operational capability (Isbășescu, p. 11). Anticipating the events in the Black Sea during World War II, it was considered that the elimination of the naval power of a country superior in resources did not necessarily mean the destruction of its fleet in a direct confrontation, but could be achieved by hindering action and freedom of movement. The second variant was precisely due to better mobility of the numerically inferior forces, which could manoeuvre around the opponent's ships and prevent them from taking relevant actions (Ibid., p. 12).

From these general guidelines emerges the nature of the tasks that the navy had to perform in the event of armed conflict, differentiated according to the geographical area in which it had to fight. On the Danube, for example, the naval forces were to perform the same tasks as in the First World War, i.e. support the flanks of the land armies, force river crossings, prevent the enemy from landing and destroy the enemy flotilla (AMNR, file 834/1931-1932, p. 937). At that time, it was confronted to some extent with a possible Soviet offensive in the territory of Basarabia, which could have challenged the enemy's mastery of the lower course of the river and its estuaries; in this case, it was recognised that the Danube Division could be in trouble, especially if the enemy introduced ships from the sea. The greatest problem to be solved was the replenishment of mine and material supplies for the static defences, for the naval forces available – 7 monitors and 7 river gunboats – could carry out defensive actions without having to be reinforced by costly new acquisitions. For these reasons, it was necessary for the river sector to repair the monitors, which had reached their limits and were in urgent need of repair, and to buy seven new gunboats in several stages. In addition to these additions to the floating material, special attention was to be paid to reinforcing the fixed defence forces, i.e. replenishing mine stocks, securing the ammunition of the coastal artillery and acquiring more searchlights (Ibid., p. 938).

In the years preceding the 1929 Naval Development Plan, studies raised the problem of the small size of the fleet, which, even on a superficial analysis, was insufficient to guarantee the security conditions of the country's territorial waters.

The situation was different for the naval division, because the doctrinal principles adopted by the Romanian Navy from the experience of the First World War pointed to the need for a unified development of all naval forces, i.e. surface ships as well as seaplanes and submarines (Ibid., p. 942). The arguments put forward in favour of this idea were based on the notion that an open confrontation with the vastly superior Soviet fleet was unthinkable; the enemy ships would have to be surprised and the forces distributed. With this in mind, but also in order not to be surprised in port, our fleet needed an effective reconnaissance service, consisting of aircraft and submarines, to be able to scout the enemy bases.

COMPONENTS OF THE NAVAL PLAN

The main problem that had been looming for some time was the construction of naval bases to house the naval division forces. The Inspectorate considered that one base should be built near Constanța and the second at the mouth of the Danube (Ibid., p. 942).

In 1929 the need for ships was somewhat altered from the 1924 planning in that the driving idea was to have four destroyers available at all times, i.e. there had to be eight such units, as some were inevitably in repair and others were needed for reconnaissance missions. To support a possible clash with the enemy's larger ships, the navy needed at least one fast cruiser. In an article published in 1927, Commander Vasile Năsturaș, then Chief Engineer at the Naval Arsenal in Galați (Moșneagu, 2006, p. 337), advocated the standardisation and simplification of the types of ships that the Navy would have to build in the future, as the skeleton of our future Black Sea fleet would have to consist of destroyers and light cruisers (Năsturaș, 1927, p. 284). As a standard model, he proposed the 6-7,000 tonne cruiser, the so-called *"Corsair"*, a high-speed cruiser armed with 152 mm guns and torpedo tubes.

A year later, thanks to the British naval mission led by Admiral Reginald Henderson, the Romanian Navy was offered some variants of British cruisers originally designed for Portugal by the *"Vickers-Armstrong"* company, but also offered for Romania. At the same time, Romania was offered through official channels two official variants

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designed by the British Shipbuilding Directorate, the second of which was a light cruiser of 5,700 tonnes. The *"Vickers-Armstrong"* variant was similar, at 5,700 tonnes. Armament consisted of six 152-mm guns, four 102-mm guns, an anti-aircraft machine gun and four triple torpedo tubes (Friedman, 2010, p. 193). Previously, *"Vickers"* had proposed the project numbered *"805"*, which was originally intended for Portugal but was rejected. The cruiser was an enlarged variant of the *"Cassandra"* class, 137 metres long, 13 metres wide and with a tonnage of 4,820. The armament consisted of six 152.4-mm guns, two 76-mm guns and two torpedo tubes (Ibid.).

Another project, also by *"Vickers"*, numbered *"808"*, was based on the same *"Cassandra"* class cruisers with some modifications. The variant proposed for Romania was first considered by the Dutch Navy, but after their rejection, the Romanian Navy was the next potential customer. The cruiser design had a tonnage of 5,150 (138 m/14 m) and a speed of 29 knots, achieved by oil engines. Armament was to consist of ten 152.4 mm guns in twin turrets, two 102 mm guns and four triple torpedo tubes (Ibid., p. 195). In addition to these surface ships, there were ideas to complete the naval plan with nine submarines, four at the beginning and another five in 8-9 years (AMNR, file 834/1931-1932, p. 943).

Apart from the cruiser designs, which ultimately did not come to fruition, in terms of fixed defences the programme included 152-mm or even 203-mm batteries to ensure a firing range of 20-30 km. Also seaplanes and no less than 1,500 mines for barrage (Ibid., p. 944).

As Vice-Admiral Scodrea pointed out, it was important to take the first steps and build up a nucleus of naval forces around which the future fleet would be grouped and which would make it possible to prepare personnel for the new ships to be commissioned (AMNR, file 834/1931-1932, p. 943). At the time of 1929, this nucleus of ships did not yet exist; the Navy had two destroyers and two others that were almost completed. The first, the *"Mărăști"* and the *"Mărășești"*, had been commissioned in 1916 and were clearly getting on in years. As for the light forces, 4 gunboats, 3 torpedoes and 4 submarine motorboats were already considered almost unusable, as they *"no longer had any value, were worn out and had obsolete weapons"* (Ibid., p. 945).

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Commander Vasile Năsturaș was also of the opinion that a small number of cruisers, possibly only two units, should be ordered first, which together with the new destroyers *("Regele Ferdinand"* and *"Regina Maria"*) could form the core of the fleet. This was the so-called *"tactical combat and manoeuvre unit"*. After its formation, the navy could concentrate on the naval bases, submarines and Danube monitors for the river units (Năsturaș, 1927, p. 301).

To this end, the idea of a balanced navy with fast cruisers, destroyers, submarines, anti-submarine vessels, mine hunters, coastal batteries and naval aviators was reaffirmed. These memoirs resulted in a naval plan that superseded the plan of five years earlier and was divided into several tranches. In the first three years, the first part of the programme consisted of 2 cruisers, 2 destroyers, 2 submarines, 6 anti-submarine stars, 4 minesweepers, 1 minelayer, a 305-mm battery, 1 210-mm battery, 2 152-mm batteries, 1 90-mm anti-aircraft battery, 500 barrier mines, 100 submarine bombs, 4 searchlights, 4 mobile radio stations, 3 radio locator stations, 3 coastal locator stations and minesweepers for 4 ships (AMNR, file 834/1931-1932, pp. 949-950). The total sum of these acquisitions, including the first instalments for the establishment of the naval base, amounted to 2,3 billion lei (Ibid., pp. 949-95).

Before this first stage, however, it was necessary to complete the material of the existing units, such as converting a torpedo boat into a target ship, refitting some guns, replacing warheads, completing the equipment of the naval arsenal and repairing some ships, at a cost of 117,950,000 lei (AMNR, file 834/1931-1932, p. 950).

The second stage of the naval plan (4-7 years) included two destroyers, another 500 mines, two anti-aircraft batteries, two 210-mm coastal batteries, three 152-mm coastal batteries, a floating dock, supplies for the artillery ammunition, a second stage for the naval base, four motor boats for the Danube Division and two searchlights, for a total of 1,925,000,000 lei.

In the *"third emergency category"*, i.e. over a period of (7-10 years), the Navy was to receive a fast cruiser of 5,500 tonnes, two destroyers, four attack submarines, one mine submarine, six submarine vessels, 12 torpedo boats, 3 motor boats for the Danube, 500 mines and invest another 300,000,000 lei for the naval base, with a total amount of 3,030,000,000 lei.

The second stage of the naval plan (4-7 years) included two destroyers, another 500 mines, two anti-aircraft batteries, two 210-mm coastal batteries, three 152-mm coastal batteries, a floating dock, supplies for the artillery ammunition, a second tranche for the naval base, four motor boats for the Danube Division and two searchlights, for a total of 1,925,000,000 lei.

In the long term, i.e. between 10 and 20 years, i.e. until about 1950, two more cruisers, eight destroyers of 1,800 tonnes, eight submarines of 650 tonnes, two mine submarines of 810 tonnes, a minesweeper, an aircraft carrier with 12 aircraft, a training ship of 3,500 tonnes and the completion of the naval base were estimated, making a total of 8,000,000,000 lei. The total cost of this major twenty-year naval project was over 15 billion lei.

From our point of view, of particular importance was the planning of the purchases for the next nine years, which in practice represented the period until the onset of the second world conflagration, since, from the beginning of the '30s, the rearmament of revisionist states had become evident. Thus, the Naval General Inspectored aimed to have in 1939 two light cruisers of 5-6,000 tons, two groups of destroyers, i.e. 8 units of 1,700-2,000 tons, 12 submarines (7 attack ones, and 5 mining), 12 torpedo boats, 8 coastal batteries with 75 mm to 280 mm guns, 1,000 mines, 2 mobile T. F. S. stations, 8 searchlights, 3 submarine listening posts and 3 shortwave direction finding stations, plus 12 squadrons at Vâlcov, Sulina and Constanța (Ibid., file 348, p. 213).

If the acquisitions follow the course indicated by the Inspectorate General of the Navy, the naval division must have by 1940 two cruisers, 12 destroyers, 16 submarines, 10 anti-submarine vessels, 12 torpedo boats, 1 training ship, 1 minesweeper, 4 gunboats, 3 large torpedo boats, 1 supply ship, the brig *"Mircea"*, and 2 tugs. Together with the ships, the static coastal defence was to be equipped with a 280 mm, a 210 mm, a 90 mm A.A. and 2 152 mm. The crew strength of this large unit was to reach 412 officers, 535 foremen, and 4,285 sailors (Ibid., p. 213).

The Inspectorate also identified various options for financing this ambitious project. Three variants were considered, the first two being considered more likely due to financial constraints, while the third, although ideal in terms of benefits, was more difficult to achieve in practice. The simplest solution was to provide a special loan for the navy, with a country with sufficient maritime industrial capacity and good relations with Romania as a possible ally. The loan could be completed in three years at an annual rate of 850 million lei.

The second variant, somewhat more difficult to implement, was based on the idea of granting a concession to a foreign shipyard in the area of the Romanian Navy's naval base. This shipyard would have

In the long term, i.e. between 10 and 20 years, i.e. until about 1950, two more cruisers, eight destroyers of 1,800 tonnes, eight submarines of 650 tonnes, two mine submarines of 810 tonnes, a minesweeper, an aircraft carrier with 12 aircraft, a training ship of 3,500 tonnes and the completion of the naval base were estimated, making a total of 8,000,000,000 lei. The total cost of this major twenty-year naval project was over 15 billion lei.

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The Romanian Navy did not receive any new ships until almost the beginning of World War II, except for the acquisition of the submarine "Delfinul", which was ordered as early as 1926. However, the various viewpoints of naval specialists summarised in the 1929 Naval Plan were valuable in crystallizing some variants of unit procurement in the following decade, when the deterioration of the international situation required a revision of Romanian naval policy.

received annual ship orders under the naval program, financed from budgetary and extraordinary funds. Due to the inherent difficulties at the beginning of the existence of this shipyard, the delivery pace of the ships would have been cumbersome due to the circumstances, and the supervisor did not consider it possible to reach the ten-year target for the second part of the naval program.

The third solution, the most interesting, was in fact a synthesis of the two, proposing to order the first tranche of the program in an allied country, with payment in three years, as in the case of the first variant, but with one difference. A clause would have been included in the contract, according to which the shipyards in that country would have been obliged to build a shipyard in Romania, in the naval base, during that period, with all the equipment, in order to continue the realisation of the naval plan. The total amount and the annual instalments remained the same, namely 850 million lei per year. The advantage in this case was twofold, because, on the one hand, time was gained by implementing the first stage according to the program, and on the other hand, the foundations could be laid for a maritime industry, which Romania urgently needed, and the amounts spent could be returned to the country to a large extent.

CONCLUSIONS

Ultimately, however, any purchase depends on the general economic situation, and the Romanian Navy did not receive any new ships until almost the beginning of World War II, except for the acquisition of the submarine *"Delfinul"*, which was ordered as early as 1926.

However, the various viewpoints of naval specialists summarized in the 1929 Naval Plan were valuable in crystallising some variants of unit procurement in the following decade, when the deterioration of the international situation required a revision of Romanian naval policy.

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ROMANIA, BULGARIA AND THE DECLINE OF GERMAN MILITARY POWER AT THE BLACK SEA (NOVEMBER 1942-SEPTEMBER 1944)

George UNGUREANU, PhD

National Military Archives of Romania, Central Archive Repository Pitești

The capture of Sevastopol, on 4 July 1942, and the military developments of the following months marked a genuine peak of German military presence and power at the Black Sea. Until the autumn of 1944, this presence would be history, after a quasi-uninterrupted series of Red Army successes. In this article, the impact of these military and political developments on Romania and Bulgaria and the relations between the two neighbouring states west of the Black Sea is analysed. Thus, from the position of asymmetrical allies of the Third Reich, Romania and Bulgaria would finally almost simultaneously become allies of the Soviet Union, but still find themselves in asymmetrical positions compared to the new regional hegemon. The bibliography of the article includes important Romanian, Bulgarian and Western historiographical contributions, which vary in terms of typology and range, to which many documents from the Romanian military archives, partly original ones, are added.

Keywords: Second World War; balance of power; spheres of influence; intelligence; diplomacy;

INTRODUCTION

Control of the Bosporus and Dardanelles straits had been a clear objective of Russian foreign policy since the 18th century, adopted by the Soviet regime after the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917.

In the interwar period, the Soviet state showed a tendency to assert its hegemony over the Black Sea and the Straits and to expand its military naval power, with not entirely disinterested support for Kemalist Turkey at the Lausanne (21 November 1922-24 July 1923) and Montreux (June-July 1936) conferences (Dașcovici, pp. 2-3, 110-119). At the same time, the Soviet state, which never recognised the unification of Basarabia with Romania, indirectly conveyed through Cominternist propaganda the idea of a Soviet-Bulgarian territorial union structure at the mouth of the Danube, which was increasingly reaffirmed after the dismissal of Nicolae Titulescu as head of the Romanian diplomacy on 29 August 1936 (Ungureanu, 2019, pp. 8-9).

Soviet claims to the Black Sea became known in some new forms after the Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact and the outbreak of World War II. In a telegram to Molotov on 13 November 1940, I.V. Stalin describes his position on this geopolitical question as follows: *"As far as the Black Sea is concerned, Hitler should know that the problem is not so much the exit as the entrance to the Black Sea, which has always been used by England and other states to attack the coasts of the USSR. All events since the Crimean War in the last century (19th century, author's note) until the landing of foreign troops in Crimea and Odesa in 1918-1919 show that the security of the Black Sea regions of the USSR cannot be achieved without the first finding a solution to the problem of the strait"* (apud Constantiniu, 2002, pp. 146-147).

In the summer of 1940, Soviet diplomacy strongly reaffirmed the project of territorial connection between the USSR and Bulgaria

In the interwar period, the Soviet state showed a tendency to assert its hegemony over the Black Sea and the Straits and to expand its military naval power, with not entirely disinterested support for Kemalist Turkey at the Lausanne (21 November 1922-24 July 1923) and Montreux (June-July 1936) conferences.

at the mouth of the Danube. Ultimately, however, Bulgarian claims on Romania were limited to Southern Dobrogea (the so-called Quadrilateral), a territory whose cession the Romanian government finally accepted under German pressure in August 1940 (Ungureanu, 2009, pp. 355-368). The specific aspects of this cession of territory (transfer of powers, population exchange, various financial and legal issues, etc.) were regulated in the Treaty of Craiova, signed on 7 September 1940 (Preda-Mătăsaru, 2004, passim).

The issues concerning Romania, Bulgaria and the Straits became particularly sensitive during V.M. Molotov's talks with Hitler and Ribbentrop on the occasion of the Soviet leader's visit to Berlin (12/13 November 1940). Molotov rejected his interlocutors' proposals for full military cooperation against Britain, showed no interest in possible expansion in the British West Indies, showed some interest in Iran, and insisted on the situation in the Balkans and the Black Sea. The Soviets were dissatisfied with the territorial guarantee offered by Germany and Italy to Romania after the territorial cessions of the summer of 1940 and had declared their intention to offer a similar guarantee to Bulgaria, which met with German objections (Constantiniu, pp. 147-154). The profound German-Soviet divergences over the Balkans and the Black Sea became even more apparent in the exchange of notes of 25-26 November 1940 (Kissinger, pp. 319-320; Vlad, 2014, p. 168).

In the silent, underground diplomatic struggle between Germany and the USSR for influence in Bulgaria, the Third Reich won. Bulgaria's accession to the Tripartite Pact, which was made official on 1 March 1941 (Ilčev, 2019, p. 558), sparked Soviet protests against Germany (Constantiniu, pp. 169-170). The German diplomatic offensive was also directed against Türkiye in early 1941, in preparation for the anti-Soviet war. Because of the diplomatic defeat in Bulgaria and the growing disagreements with Germany, the Soviet Union changed its attitude towards Türkiye, which led to the signing of a Turkish-Soviet declaration of non-aggression on 24 March 1941 (Ekrem, p. 119).

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Romanian diplomacy also joined German efforts to bring Türkiye into the Axis camp, with Ion Antonescu himself voicing such proposals in talks with the Turkish diplomat Suphi Tanriover on 27 May 1941; the steps taken by the Antonescu government in this regard continued after the outbreak of the anti-Soviet war on 22 June 1941 (AMAE, vol. 62, pp. 69-77, 106-10; Ekrem, pp. 119-121).

As in the years of the First World War, naval operations in the Black Sea were a secondary and smaller part of the much more important land operations on the Eastern Front (King, 2015, p. 246). The outbreak of the anti-Soviet war highlighted the asymmetrical position of Romania and Bulgaria within the Axis system. Romania, for example, participated directly in *Operation "Barbarossa"* with a troop strength of about 325,000 (Duțu, 2008, p. 226) to recapture the territories occupied by the Soviet Union in the summer of 1940, while Bulgaria, which had already achieved all its territorial objectives after the German campaign in the Balkans (April 1941), did not break off diplomatic relations with the USSR but instead assumed responsibility for representing the interests of Germany and its allies (including Romania) in relations with the Soviet Union (Mateeva, Tepavičarov, 1989, p. 268).

By the end of 1941, both Romania and Bulgaria entered a state of war with other states, primarily with Britain and its dominions, but also with the USA (Calafeteanu, coord., 2003, pp. 333-334; Mateeva, Tepavičarov, pp. 102, 251). The governments and public opinion in both South-Eastern European states regarded the war with the powers of the Anglo-Saxon world as a rather formal situation. Thus, the phrase *"symbolic war"* circulated in Bulgaria (Ilčev, p. 560), and Marshal Ion Antonescu declared to a group of Romanian journalists in January 1942 *"I am allied with Germany against Russia, I am neutral towards England and Germany, I am on the side of the Americans against the Japanese"* (after Giurescu, coord., 2010, p. 454).

An essential moment for Germany's military expansion in the Black Sea was the fall of the long-besieged port of Sevastopol after the attack on 4 July 1942, a victory that completed the conquest of the Crimean

An essential moment for Germany's military expansion in the Black Sea was the fall of the long-besieged port of Sevastopol after the attack on 4 July 1942, a victory that completed the conquest of the Crimean peninsula. From the autumn of 1941 until 4 July 1942, some Romanian military units effectively cooperated with German units in the operations in Crimea.

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peninsula. From the autumn of 1941 until 4 July 1942, some Romanian military units effectively cooperated with German units in the operations in Crimea (Duțu, 2008, pp. 252-258). After the fall of Odesa on 16 October 1941, most Romanian forces had been withdrawn from the front, except for the Mountain Corps and two brigades fighting in the Crimea (Ibid., p. 252). Romania's direct participation in the anti-Soviet war became significant again in the 1942 campaign (3rd and 4th Armies) after Marshal Ion Antonescu's decision following his talks with Adolf Hitler on 11 and 12 February 1942 (Ibid., pp. 261-262).

Despite the progressive loss of some important ports, the Soviet navy remained strong in the Black Sea and was able to conduct offshore interdiction operations from smaller bases at Poti and Batumi on the Caucasian coast, especially with the support of British patrol ships (King, pp. 246-247).

In the face of the advance of German troops north of the Black Sea (and in other areas to the west USSR), Türkiye's neutrality was viewed favourably by Stalin and Molotov, despite the conclusion of the German-Turkish Friendship Treaty of 18 June 1941 and the expansion of economic relations between Hitler's Germany and the Turkish Republic (Biagini, pp. 127-128).

Bulgaria's neutrality in the German-Soviet war caused discontent in both Berlin and Moscow. Among the reasons for the tensions in Bulgarian relations with the USSR in the spring and summer of 1942 were: the case of General Vladimir Zaimov (arrested, tried, sentenced to death and executed for spying for the Soviet Union), the fear of Bulgarian officers of a Soviet invasion via the ports of Varna and Burgas, and the subversive actions of the Communists (Pavlowitch, 2002, pp. 302-303; Ilčev, pp. 568-570). In mid-September 1942, several Bulgarian cities were the target of air raids attributed to the Soviet air force, and the consulate building USSR in Varna was bombed by German warships in the Black Sea, forcing it to cease operations (Miller, pp. 85-86; Ilčev, p. 569).

As for Romanian-Bulgarian relations between the summer of 1941 and the autumn of 1942, there was a normal atmosphere, with some

Bulgaria's neutrality in the German-Soviet war caused discontent in both Berlin and Moscow. Among the reasons for the tensions in Bulgarian relations with the USSR in the spring and summer of 1942 were: the case of General Vladimir Zaimov (arrested, tried, sentenced to death and executed for spying for the Soviet Union), the fear of Bulgarian officers of a Soviet invasion via the ports of Varna and Burgas, and the subversive actions of the Communists.

signs of cordiality, but also with several negative aspects, of which we mention, first of all, the *"consequences"* of the territorial problems on both sides of the border in Dobrogea, then the status of the ethnic Romanians from the Bulgarian Timok Valley, respectively of ethnic Bulgarians from Romania (including those from Basarabia), as well as Romanian mistrust of Hungarian-Bulgarian relations (Ungureanu, 2009, pp. 395-396).

EXPOSURE

Due to the progressive and faltering weakening of the German and pro-German forces encircled Stalingrad in late 1942, the Soviets were able to successively deploy new troops from the siege forces, which they diverted to the North Caucasian areas (Liddel Hart, s.a., vol. II, p. 116). However, continued German resistance at Stalingrad facilitated Axis efforts in the North Caucasian areas to withdraw westwards via Rostov-on-Don, an operation carried out just as the last German forts in the city were being destroyed by the Soviets (Ibid., p. 118). In the spring the Germans counter-attacked, and on 15 and 19 March were able to recapture the cities of Kharkov and Belgorod, which had been lost in the first half of February (Ibid., p. 121).

After the disaster of the Romanian 3rd and 4th Armies in the battles of Thunder Ridge and Stalingrad, Romania's direct military participation in the anti-Soviet war was drastically reduced. The total losses of Romanian forces on the Eastern Front between 15 November 1942 and 15 March 1943 amounted to 15,566 killed, 67,183 wounded and 98,692 missing (Scurtu, Buzatu, 1999, p. 408).

After the disaster at the Donner Ridge and Stalingrad, Romania's direct military contribution to the anti-Soviet war was reduced to eight divisions (four mountain fighter divisions, three infantry divisions and one cavalry division), which were to defend a bridgehead in the North Caucasus east of the Crimean peninsula (Kuban – Taman peninsula). The advance of Soviet troops to other sections of the front made this mission impossible and forced a retreat to the Crimean Peninsula in the autumn of 1943 (Duțu, 2008, p. 278).

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As a result of the resounding defeats of the Axis powers in Berlin and Rome, both on the Eastern Front and in North Africa, in late 1942 and early 1943, the attitude of the leaders of the UN coalition towards Turkish neutrality changed. For example, British Prime Minister Winston Churchill began to question the opening of a front in the Balkans through an Anglo-American landing at the same time that Türkiye abandoned its neutrality and embraced the United Nations cause (Ekrem, pp. 129-130). The idea of an Allied landing in the Balkans with Turkish support was to prove a stubborn illusion in Romanian and Bulgarian political circles in 1943-1944. Actual historical developments were to confirm these expectations only belatedly and to a small extent, namely with the landing of British troops in Greece in October 1944, after the Red Army had taken control of Romania and Bulgaria.

Due to its neutral status, Türkiye became a breeding ground for diplomatic contacts and soundings, especially between the envoys of the allied German states and the Anglo-American representatives. Among the contacts initiated midway between 1942 and 1943 by Mihai Antonescu, the head of the Romanian diplomacy, were confidential talks with the Turkish minister in Bucharest, Suphi Tanriover (Giurescu, 1999, p. 188). Apart from a whole series of differences between them, Romania, Bulgaria and Türkiye felt threatened in one way or another by the Soviet offensive, and the question arose of how to win the goodwill of the USA and Great Britain.

As early as the winter of 1942-1943, Mihai Antonescu had drafted a project to work with Italy and Germany's other allies to distance themselves from the Reich, sign a separate peace treaty with the US and Britain, and show solidarity against Bolshevism (Calafeteanu, coord., p. 335). Coincidentally or not, in early 1943 the King of Italy, Victor Emmanuel, made some entries in his diary about the need for contact with Hungary, Romania and Bulgaria (Dimitrov, 1976, p. 432).

According to the Romanian diplomat Alexandru G. Cretzianu (1895-1974), the plans of the Bulgarian ruler Boris III were coordinated with those of Mihai Antonescu. After Stalingrad, the Bulgarian king advocated the formation of a coalition government led by Krăstyo Pastuhov (1874-1949), a social democratic leader, to end the war. To this end, Boris III had sent some signals to his father-in-law, the King of Italy, through his daughter, the Princess of Hesse, and the results were positive (Cretzianu, 1998, p. 118). Bulgarian sources also indicate that the Bulgarian king and his key associates were convinced in early 1943 that Hitler's Germany was heading for defeat (Mănčev, vol. III, 2008, p. 343).

At the beginning of 1943, Romanian-Bulgarian relations were at a normal stage, with elements of friendship and cordiality. In this context, it is worth mentioning the attention paid by some officials and the main Bulgarian central newspapers to the celebration of the Union of Principalities on 24 January 1943, with the head of the Press Directorate himself, the lawyer and journalist Nikolay P. Nikolaev, speaking on the subject on Sofia Radio (AMNR-Dca-P, file 487/1943, pp. 1-17).

On 1 April 1943, a bilateral agreement was concluded to solve the problems arising from the application of certain provisions of the Treaty of Craiova[1].

Thus, the Bulgarian government, having postponed payment of the sum of one billion lei provided for in the financial agreement to the Treaty of Craiova, now agreed to pay 850 million lei, of which 380 million immediately and the rest within three months; at the same time, the Romanian government waived its claims amounting to 26 million lei, which was the equivalent of the transfer operation of the Bulgarian emigrants from Northern Dobrogea. Regarding the remaining crops, it was agreed that the Bulgarian government would deliver 12,000 tonnes of maize and 2,244,000 Swiss francs in exchange for 6,000 tonnes of maize, 4,550,000 francs and 5,000 tonnes of sunflowers, while the Romanian government waived its right to reclaim the remaining cotton crops.

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[1] Full text at *Arhivele Ministerului Afacerilor Externe al României, Bulgaria (1920-1944)* Collection, vol. 86 – *relaţii cu România (1941-1943)*, pp. 572-580.

About the liquidation of rural property, it was agreed that Article V of the Treaty of Craiova would not apply to civil servants who still owned real estate in Southern Dobrogea on 14 September 1940, nor to legal persons; instead, Romania was to pay 20 million lei on the spot. The basic criterion for determining the scope of Article V remained residence and not ethnicity, and a new 18-month period for free liquidation was established. The period for voluntary emigration was extended to 1 November 1943 and was to be on the basis of individual declarations to be submitted by 11 June 1943 (Ibid., p. 577), on strictly equal terms and without consideration. On this basis, the Bulgarian authorities tried to solve the problem of the East Timok Romanians by settling ethnic Bulgarians from the Banat and other regions of Romania in their place in certain localities (ANR, file no. 1252, pp. 259-262).

An important moment for Romanian-Bulgarian contacts was the visit of the diplomat Svetoslav Pomenov, then minister of the Bulgarian royal house, to Bucharest in May 1943. In the Romanian capital, the Bulgarian dignitary met with King Michael I, Marshal Ion Antonescu and with Foreign Minister Mihai Antonescu (Dimitrov, p. 431). In his speech on the occasion of the award of a medal to King Michael I, S. Pomenov stressed that Romania and Bulgaria had to unite their efforts to defend their political independence. The text of the speech was not published so as not to alarm the Germans (Cretzianu, p. 118). Mihai Antonescu used the meeting with Pomenov to convey to Sofia the call for political-diplomatic cooperation within the framework of the system conceived by the Romanian Foreign Minister. The message was received, but the Bulgarian head of government Bogdan Filov noted in his diary: *"I will not mount this chariot. The Romanians demand that we break away from the Germans"* (apud Dimitrov, p. 431). In the talks with King Boris, the head of the government of Sofia would speak somewhat differently: *"I will not get on this chariot! The Romanians want to discredit us before the Germans to have arguments to take up the Dobrogea problem again"* (Nedev, 1997, p. 525). Thus the initiatives of May 1943 were unsuccessful.

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According to an intelligence report from the General Police Directorate of 20 June 1943, based on several sources considered reliable, the Bulgarian Minister Serafimov, accompanied by six Bulgarian journalists, had arrived in Bucharest by train the previous day (AMNR-Dca-P, *M.St.M. - Secția 2 Informații* Collection, file no. 1275/1943, p. 34)[2].

The summer of 1943 brought new changes in the conduct of the war and marked the final and irreversible transfer of the strategic initiative to the United Nations coalition. The major military confrontations at Kursk-Oryol and the collapse of the Italian fascist regime were the main events leading to this development. In the case of Romania and Bulgaria, it should be noted that the state of war with the USA and Britain is gradually losing its symbolic character, as both South-Eastern European countries have been the target of some devastating air attacks. In this context, the concern for a diplomatic solution to avoid a total catastrophe has increased. Marshal Ion Antonescu categorically rejected the demands of the leaders of the historical parties for an immediate and unilateral withdrawal of troops from the Eastern Front: *"What would be the result? The commanders of our troops in the Kuban would be shot by the Germans, just as the Italian generals were shot on the retreat from Sicily. The country would be occupied by the Germans and a legionary government with Horia Sima or another leader would take over. Moreover, they would hand over all of Transylvania to the Hungarians"*; the historian Dinu C. Giurescu considered the scenario conjured up by Ion Antonescu to be very plausible (Giurescu, p. 191). In Bulgaria, the unexpected death of King Boris on 28 August 1943 dealt a heavy blow to the tendencies towards foreign policy autonomy vis-à-vis Germany.

Immediately after Mussolini's fall (25 July 1943), a Romanian proposal for cooperation against the Bolshevik threat was transmitted

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[2] We were unable to identify a Bulgarian Minister by the name of Serafimov; see Taşev, T.V., *Ministrite na Bălgariia (1879-1999). Enţiklopidičen spravočnik*, Akademično Izdatelstvo *"Profesor Marin Drinov"* i Izdatelstvo na Ministerăt na Otbranata *"Sv. Gheorghi Pobedonoseţ"*, Sofia, 1999, passim.

to Sofia, but King Boris hesitated to make a decision, while Bogdan Filov informed the German Legation (after Dimitrov, p. 431; Nedev, pp. 525-526). However, the Romanian minister in Bulgaria, Ion Șerban Christu (1895-1953), informed Al. Cretzianu, who travelled to Ankara in September, that he had received clear messages from the Foreign Ministry in Sofia that there were coordinated efforts to distance themselves from Germany (Cretzianu, p. 119).

In July 1943, the Bulgarians held a series of talks with the Americans through the Swiss, hoping for recognition of all territorial acquisitions, especially in Macedonia and Thrace. The Americans replied that no guarantees could be given before the Peace Conference, except for possible recognition of Bulgarian rights in southern Dobrogea, possibly on condition that Bulgarian troops leave the region pending the Conference's verdict (Miller, pp. 113-114, 180-181; Jackowicz, 1982, pp. 31-43).

A Romanian military dispatch from the end of July 1943 reported that the morale of the Bulgarian population was deteriorating due to the confiscation and requisitioning of grain for the benefit of the Germans, leading to great discontent with the government and even with King Boris, who was rumoured to want to abdicate; another negative phenomenon reported was the increasing number of desertions and subsequent defections to the ranks of the partisans by Bulgarian soldiers deployed in the territories of the former Yugoslav Kingdom (AMNR-Dca-P, file no. 485/1943, p. 95). The same document records massive deliveries of German armaments to Bulgaria via the Danube, which is corroborated in an intelligence note dated 25 August 1943 (Ibid., pp. 83-84, 94). A note from the secret service SSI of 14 August 1943 also recorded the fierce rumours about the dismissal (or resignation) of Bogdan Filov from the post of head of government and the reinstatement of Georgi Kiosseivanov (Bogdan Filov's predecessor until 15 February 1940 and a proponent of opening up to the Western major democracies) (AMNR-Dca-P, file no. 486/1943, p. 3). At the end of August 1943, the authors of a synthesis of SSI on *"The Bulgarian Press and the Organisation of the National Economy"*,

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A Romanian military dispatch from the end of July 1943 reported that the morale of the Bulgarian population was deteriorating due to the confiscation and requisitioning of grain for the benefit of the Germans, leading to great discontent with the government and even with King Boris, who was rumoured to want to abdicate; another negative phenomenon reported was the increasing number of desertions and subsequent defections to the ranks of the partisans by Bulgarian soldiers deployed in the territories of the former Yugoslav Kingdom.

in the context of the presentation of debates on the possibilities of industrialisation in Bulgaria, noted that any reference to the *"New European Order"* had disappeared from Bulgarian newspapers (Ibid., file no. 485/1943, pp. 358-359).

In 1943, the question of the ethnicity of Bulgarians in Romania and Romanians in Bulgaria continued to be present in bilateral relations. Thus wrote the lawyer At. Golii, a member of the joint Romanian-Bulgarian commission for population exchange in the municipalities of Vinga, Denta, Brestea and Beșenova Veche, inhabited by Bulgarians of Roman Catholic denomination, in a memorandum prepared after a visit to this commission. Golii, a member of this commission, drew attention to the Hungarian sympathies within this ethno-cultural group (AMNR-Dca-P, file no. 487/1943, pp. 183-186).

In the middle of 1943, there was also the case of the 14 Bulgarian citizens of Romanian origin from the municipalities of Găureni and Gulianți (Plevna – Nicopole area) who were arrested and ill-treated by Bulgarian police officers on the orders of the local authorities after they had applied to leave for Romania on the basis of Annex C of the Craiova Treaty. Following the intervention of the Romanian delegates in the Joint Commission for Population Exchange, the 14 citizens were finally released (Ibid., pp. 158-181).

In the twelve months following the death of the Bulgarian King Boris, there is growing discontent and concern among the population and political circles of Romania and Bulgaria about the ultimate fate of these states in the face of the continuing decline of German power.

After the great armoured battles of the summer of 1943, which ended in a draw in favour of the Soviets, the strategic initiative finally passed into their hands: In September 1943 the major port cities of Novorossiysk were recaptured, and in the spring of 1944 Nikolaev and Odesa (King, p. 247). In spring 1944, during Operation *"Uman-Botoșani"*, the port of Kherson was recaptured by the Soviets on 13 March 1944, while the Germans held out in Nikolaev until 28 March. Other Soviet troops under Ivan Koniev had crossed the South Bug on 12 March and within a few days reached the Dniester,

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which was crossed on 18 March (Liddel Hart, pp. 244-245). On 4 April 1944, areas of Bucharest near the North Railway Station became the target of a devastating Anglo-American air raid. In the following months, the Romanian railway network and oil installations were the targets of numerous Anglo-American bombing raids (Giurescu, coord., 2010, pp. 460-462).

By mid-April, the Soviet incursion continued its threatening advance up and towards Romanian territory. At the end of March, Soviet troops crossed the upper Prut, on 5 April, the town of Razdelnaia near Tiraspol was occupied, and on 10 April the port city of Odesa, from which most German and Romanian troops had withdrawn, was recaptured (Liddel Hart, p. 248). Under these conditions, on 16 March 1944, the troops of the Romanian Third Army were withdrawn west of the Dniester, except for the units that continued to hold out in the Crimea, and the Fourth Army became operational again; a month later, the German-Soviet front in the Romanian sector was stabilised on the Kuty-Pașcani-Northern Iași-Northern Chișinău-Dubăsari-Nistru line (Scurtu, Buzatu, p. 408).

After the death of King Boris, as Crown Prince Simeon II was only six years old, the regency was established in Bulgaria. Bogdan Filov stepped down as head of government and took over as regent, the economist Dobri Bojilov, became prime minister and Dimităr Șișmanov became head of Bulgarian diplomacy (Miller, 143). The circumstances surrounding the death of King Boris fuelled and reinforced mutual distrust between Hitler and members of the Bulgarian royal family, resulting in Queen Giovanna di Savoia and her children leaving the country in the autumn of 1943 (Gauthier, 2004, p. 262). Hitler, for his part, ordered the imprisonment of Princess Mafalda, the Queen's sister, who died in a Nazi camp during an Anglo-American air raid (Miller, pp. 144-145).

The government of Dobri Bojilov, which remained in power in Bulgaria until the end of May 1944, still hoped for reconciliation between the Axis powers and the Washington-London tandem and therefore sought to reassure the Western Allies that it was a bulwark against the Bolshevik threat; the development of the pro-British movement throughout the country was encouraged in parallel with the harsh repression of communist resistance (de Launay, vol. II, 1988, p. 244). A note from SSI dated 31 August 1943 on the situation in Bulgaria concluded with this assessment: *"After the death of King Boris, concern about the future increased in all circles"* (AMNR-Dca-P, file no. 485/1943, p. 224).

During their visit to Germany on 15 to 21 October 1943, the three regents (former Prime Minister Bogdan Filov, General N. Mihov and Prince Kiril of Preslav) were surprised to find that Hitler believed only in a successful defence, was counting on aggravation of the differences between the Soviets and the Anglo-Americans, and had no intention of seeking a compromise with the USA and UK. Based on these findings, the Dobri Bojilov government authorised a series of cautious interviews of Anglo-Americans in Ankara by private individuals close to the late King Boris (de Launay, p. 245). The Anglo-American air raid of 14 November 1943 had not caused any significant damage, but it had shattered the myth of the *"symbolic war"*, and two months later Sofia was the target of a massive Anglo-American air raid that claimed many victims (Miller, p. 167).

On 25 October 1943, Hitler asked Ion Antonescu for greater Romanian participation on the Eastern Front to defend the Nipru line: *"Any division that Romania can now put at my disposal will give me the possibility of releasing German divisions for a counterattack, which may ultimately be of decisive importance for the restoration of the situation on the lower Dnieper"* (apud Giurescu, p. 83). Three weeks later, the Romanian leader replied to his German counterpart. After reviewing the military contribution and losses Romania had suffered in more than two years of war, Marshal Ion Antonescu called for *"a minimum of weapons and a minimum of equipment"*, pointing out that *"apart from some material sent directly to the units in the Crimea and Cuban, what our army has received is insufficient and worthless [...]. To bring in new Romanian units now is rather to increase*

During their visit to Germany on 15 to 21 October 1943, the three regents (former Prime Minister Bogdan Filov, General N. Mihov and Prince Kiril of Preslav) were surprised to find that Hitler believed only in a successful defence, was counting on aggravation of the differences between the Soviets and the Anglo-Americans, and had no intention of seeking a compromise with the USA and UK.

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the value of losses unnecessarily than to contribute effectively to the improvement of the situation at the front", and finally to demand the withdrawal of the Romanian divisions from the Crimea *"in order not to lose them in advance"* and to use them for the defence of the Nistru line (Ibid., p. 84).

In November 1943, the government in Sofia officially, but confidentially, initiated some inquiry among the Turkish government about possible cooperation with the Soviet offensive. The government in Ankara had already become the target of Soviet propaganda accusations because it had relations with Germany and did not want to jeopardise its position, so it rejected diplomatic advances from Sofia (Miller, p. 159).

Between November 1943 and February 1944, Türkiye's relations with the USA and Great Britain, but also with the Soviet Union, went through a difficult phase, as Turkey, under Anglo-American pressure, asserted its need for weapons and ammunition and formulated a series of conditions and demands that were almost impossible for the allies to meet at that time. However, in the spring of 1944, after the possibilities of Anglo-American aid had increased, Turkey distanced itself more and more from Germany (Biagini, pp. 131-132).

At the beginning of November 1943, at the same time as the recapture of Kyiv, and taking advantage of a gap created in the area of Melitopol, Soviet troops crossed the Nogai steppe, entering the Lower Dnieper area and thus succeeding in isolating the German and Romanian forces in the Crimean Peninsula (Liddel Hart, pp. 138-139). The Romanian military forces stuck here amounted to 66,102 soldiers, including 2,427 officers and 2,416 non-commissioned officers, constituting seven divisions (Giurescu, p. 104).

On 27 March 1944, Ion Antonescu reiterated to Hitler his request for the withdrawal of these troops: *"This is the last favourable moment to evacuate Crimea, regardless of the enemy's offensive intentions"*. Antonescu's request was met with a stereotypical refusal from Hitler, who was in no way willing to accept the loss of Crimea (Ibid.). Soviet forces would launch the final decisive attack on the Crimean Peninsula

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on 8 April 1944, and on 13 May 1944, the fighting on the Peninsula ended with the surrender of 30,000 German troops (Liddel Hart, pp. 248-249). According to estimates quoted by historian Dinu C. Giurescu, the Soviet offensive in Crimea (8 April-13 May 1944) caused casualties between 23,854 and 30,897 to the Romanian troops (Giurescu, p. 104).

In parallel with the fighting on the Peninsula, the Romanian navy, in collaboration with the German navy, managed, under very difficult conditions, to evacuate more than 120,000 people (of which 36,557 Romanians, 58,486 Germans and, in smaller numbers, Slovaks, Russian and Ukrainian volunteers, civilians, etc.), 21,457 soldiers were evacuated by air, while several thousand soldiers and civilians lost their lives during the evacuation operations, cause of the Soviet air and naval attacks (Giurescu, coord., p. 461).

The approach of the Soviet-German front to the Crimean Peninsula and the re-entry of the Red Army into this important strategic area in the north of the country did not go unnoticed in Bulgaria. A Romanian intelligence memo from Varna, dated 11 October 1943, recorded the deep impression made on the local population by the news of the sinking of the Bulgarian ship Varna in the area of the Crimean Peninsula, with all 32 members of the crew, originally from the area itself, losing their lives (AMNR-Dca-P, file no. 485/1943, p. 269). A few months later, after the German and Romanian troops had left the territory of the Crimean Peninsula for good, the ethnic Bulgarians here (about 14,000) were to be deported to Central Asia (Ilčev, p. 590).

Türkiye's improving relations with the Allies and its distancing from Germany in the spring of 1944 fuelled speculations and rumours of an imminent entry into the war against Germany, which heightened the concerns in Sofia. Even tougher measures were ordered against partisan groups, but army loyalty was in a tailspin. Thus, on 17 May 1944, a company of the Serbian Occupation Corps crossed *in corpore* into the ranks of the resistance movement (de Launay, p. 246).

As the Red Army troops approached the Balkan area, Romanian diplomatic and military circles were surprised by the increasing importance given to Bulgaria by the Soviet Union. Rumours were

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brought up in the Swiss press about the appointment as Soviet minister in Sofia of the famous *apparatchik* Vladimir Dekanozov (AMNR-Dca-P, file no. 485/1943, pp. 378-3793). On 29 October 1943, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs confidentially transmitted to General Ilie Șteflea, Chief of the General Military Staff, some information on the recent visit to Germany of Prince Kiril (brother of the late King Boris) and Bogdan Filov. According to the authors of the address, the German dignitaries had expressed concern about Soviet speculation of pan-Slavistic slogans, especially after Stalin reviewed his position towards the Orthodox Church and the election of the Patriarch of Russia (Ibid, p. 375). In an intelligence memo from 2 December 1943, submitted from the 9th Infantry Division, some fragments of the speech given in *Săbranie* on 2 December 1943 by the Bulgarian Foreign Minister were reproduced and briefly commented on, namely: the statement that Bulgarian-Soviet relations would not change (seen as an allusion to a secret bilateral pact), and the emphasis on links and affinities with Hungary, in contrast to the more reserved terms used against Romania and Italy (Ibid., p. 416).

At the same time, the Kremlin's tone towards Bulgaria was getting harsher, and the reproaches and demands were increasing. On 22 January and 17 April 1944, the Soviet government protested against the provision of Bulgarian territory and communication routes to German troops. On 26 April, the Soviet Union demanded not only the reopening of the consulate in Varna but also the opening of two new consulates in the cities of Ruse and Burgas. To this request repeated insistently by the Soviets, the Bojilov government responded with some evasive remarks about bilateral relations of neutrality and fairness, as well as postponing the restoration of consular relations until the normalisation of bilateral trade relations (Mateeva, Tepavičarov, p. 269).

Regarding Romanian-Bulgarian relations during this period (August 1943-August 1944), Romania's tendency to draw Bulgaria

into an anti-communist combination is obvious. Thus, in August 1943, Ion Antonescu sent Bogdan Filov a proposal that Romania and Bulgaria should collaborate to defend the Balkans, without changing their relations with Germany. Filov disclosed these plans to German diplomat Adolf-Heinz Beckerle, who thought that the talks might be useful, but that *von* Ribbentrop would not be very happy with the plan (Miller, pp. 116-117; de Launay, p. 245). *"What can we do? Nothing!"*, Prime Minister D. Bojilov told the Romanian diplomat I. Christu in January 1944; the Bulgarian government followed its way, not seriously considering either withdrawing from the war against the USA and Great Britain or breaking off relations with the USSR (Calafeteanu, 2011, p. 216).

The attitude of the leaders in Sofia towards the Romanian proposals fully confirms Lee Marshal Miller's assertion about the difference between King Boris III and his successors: *"Boris had been opportunistic and flexible, especially in relations with Germany, but his successors were dogmatic Germanophiles and unimaginative"* (Miller, p. 174).

Another noteworthy fact, in the same context, is the persistence of Romanian suspicions and fears towards Bulgaria, regarding Old Dobrogea. In an intelligence memo of the SSI dated 29 November 1943, it was recorded: *"For some time now, articles on Dobrogea have been published widely and almost daily in the Bulgarian press. Most of them were inspired by statements from Bucharest, which were probably misinterpreted by Bulgarian journalists who visited Romania"* (AMNR-Dca-P, file no. 485/1943, p. 467).

In another intelligence memo, dated 1 December 1943, the construction of a new power station in Varna was considered one of the stages in the Bulgarian authorities' plan for the electrification of villages, adopted after the recovery of Southern Dobrogea (Ibid., p. 24). On 30 December 1943, the head of the Foreign Liaison Office of the General Staff, Major V. Plesnilă, communicated to Office 2 of the 2nd Section of the GMS the information that the Bulgarian military attaché in Bucharest, Major Čavdarov, had been informed, on two

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[3] SSI memo from 12 October 1943.

occasions, of the dissatisfaction of the Romanian authorities with the Bulgarian propaganda images of Romanian Dobrogea, placed on the packaging of matches; Major Čavdarov had promised to intervene in Sofia to withdraw these products from the market (AMNR-Dca-P, file no. 1275/1943, p. 217).

Other reasons for concern in Bucharest were generated by Bulgaria's good relations with Hungary, considered a symptom of the persistence of Bulgarian aspirations over Northern Dobrogea (Ibid.; file no. 535/1944, pp. 18-19). An SSI synthesis, dated 21 December 1943, noted the abundance of material praising Hungary, Admiral Horthy and Hungarian revisionism in the Bulgarian press (Ibid., file no. 485/1943, p. 430). In another Romanian military synthesis, dated June 1944, several details of friendly Hungarian-Bulgarian relations were mentioned: the common hostility towards Serbia, the manifestations of friendship occasioned by the conclusion of commercial and cultural agreements in 1943, but also the similarity of interests about Romania, concerning Southern Transylvania and Northern Dobrogea (AMNR-Dca-P, file no. 535/1944, p. 17).

As for Romania, at the beginning of September 1943, an SSI memo recorded, from a *"serious source"*, that the main Bulgarian central newspapers had published, under the title *"Strengthening of friendly relations between Bulgaria and Romania"*, a text about 10 lines, focusing on the cultural-scientific and artistic side (Ibid., file no. 485/1943, p. 479). However, other Romanian military documents show a less favourable attitude towards Romanians in Bulgaria. According to a memo of the SSI from 27 November 1943, the Romanians ethnics from the Bulgarian Timok Valley were not allowed to do their military training near their home localities and were sent to border units and Macedonia. This was the case of the 51st Infantry Regiment, camped in Skopje, a military unit composed mostly of ethnic Romanians (Ibid., p. 473).

On 26 January 1944, a new Bulgarian minister was officially appointed in Bucharest: Ivan V. Popov, none other than the former head of Bulgarian diplomacy from 15 February 1940 to 11 April 1942

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(Mateeva, Tepavičarov, p. 237). Romania's interests in the Bulgarian capital continued to be represented until the autumn of 1945 by Ion Șerban Christu (Ibid., p. 238). A Bulgarian consulate was operating in Galați, under the leadership of the diplomat Ivan Stančov. An SSI memo from 30 March 1944 mentioned Stančov's visit from ten days earlier to the German consulate in Galați, where he had had a one-and-a-half-hour talk with his counterpart, Alfred Lörner. According to the SSI memo, the Bulgarian consul was seeking some information on the specific developments on the Eastern Front, under the pretext of concern for the situation of the ethnic Bulgarians in Southern Basarabia (AMNR-Dca-P, file no. 1275/1943, p. 286).

Confronted by the Soviet incursion, the Romanians stopped thinking about regaining the Quadrilateral, which was absent from the agenda of the talk points held with the representatives of the United Nations Coalition in Ankara, Cairo, Stockholm, etc. However, both Barbu Știrbey, in Cairo, in the spring, during the talks with the Allies, and I. Antonescu, at his last meeting with Hitler (5-6 August 1944), raised the issue of protecting Romania against the potential Hungarian-Bulgarian threat (Ungureanu, 2009, p. 397).

The beginning of June 1944 saw, in addition to the entry of Anglo-American troops in Rome and the opening of the second front in Normandy, a series of political and diplomatic events concerning Bulgaria and Romania. Thus, a new government was formed in Sofia, under the diplomat Ivan Bagrianov, with Bulgaria's former minister in Berlin, Pârvan Draganov, as foreign minister (Miller, p. 174). At the same time, discussions between Romania and the United Nations Coalition broke down, both in Stockholm and in Cairo, due to Marshal Ion Antonescu's objections to the armistice conditions announced by the Soviets, and to the collective American-British-Soviet refusal to continue talks with the opposition emissaries (Calafeteanu, coord., p. 339).

The Bagrianov government launched 867 operations against the armed resistance movement during June and July, killing, by some estimates, more than 9,000 partisans and about 20,000 civilians;

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however, the popularity of the resistance movement was growing, including among the army and police (de Launay, p. 246).

On a diplomatic level, the US and the UK conditioned the signing of the armistice with Bulgaria on the withdrawal of the Bulgarian administration and troops from the Greek and Yugoslav territories occupied after 6 April 1941, and on the restoration of the borders existing at that date between Bulgaria, Greece and Yugoslavia (Račev, 1998, pp. 257-258, 266). The refusal of the USSR to participate in the work of the European Consultative Commission, based in London, in matters concerning Bulgaria, because the latter was not in a state of war with the Soviet Union, was regarded with suspicion by the Anglo-Americans, as a ploy to prevent Greece from regaining Western Thrace and thus bringing the Red Army to the Aegean Sea via Bulgaria (Ibid., pp. 258-259).

In an appendix to an information synthesis from June 1944, after reviewing the Soviet demands towards Bulgaria, it was stated that: *"a break in diplomatic relations from the Soviet initiative does not seem to be excluded"*, since *"despite all Soviet pressure, the Bulgarian government does not seem to be giving up anything from its position as a sincere ally of Germany..."* (AMNR-Dca-P, file no. 535/1944, p. 79). However, in the contents of the above-mentioned synthesis, the sending of military attachés to Moscow and Sofia was regarded as a sign of the strengthening of bilateral diplomatic relations and a gloomy but interesting prediction was made about the future of Romanian-Bulgarian relations, in the context of the Soviet forces unstoppable advance: *"It is not excluded that, should Soviet troops, in their offensive, reach the Bulgarian border or attempt a landing on the Bulgarian Black Sea coast, a total regime change in favour of the Soviets will take place in Bulgaria. In this hypothesis, one could also count on the Bulgarian army, together with the Russian (Soviet, our note) army, participating in an attack from the south against Romania (in Dobrogea)"* (Ibid., pp. 17-18). In July 1944, during discussions with Ion Christu, I. Bagrianov and P. Draganov expressed their conviction that Bulgaria would be able to maintain good relations with the USSR,

but also hoped that the advance of the Red Army would be stopped (by others, our note) (Calafeteanu, p. 216).

On 2 August 1944, the National Assembly of the Republic of Türkiye voted to break off diplomatic relations with Germany (a formal declaration of war would be issued only on 23 February 1945) (Biagini, pp. 133-134). At that time, Marshal Ion Antonescu still believed in an imminent entry of the Turkish state into the war, on the side of Great Britain, respectively, in an imminent Anglo-American landing in the Balkans. Mihai Antonescu also interpreted Türkiye's gesture on 2 August 1944 in the same manner (Giurescu, pp. 196-197).

At the same time, Mihai Antonescu sent the Western Allies, through Professor Constantin C. Giurescu and Colonel Traian Teodorescu, the Romanian military attaché in Türkiye, who had contacted the American consul in Istanbul, Burton Y. Berry, a confidential message concerning Romania's readiness to make broad concessions to the Anglo-Americans in areas such as oil, minerals and timber, in exchange for the USA and the UK taking over the war reparations demanded of Romania by the Soviets, and its readiness to resist the German troops in the country, on condition of receiving Anglo-American aid in the form of planes, airborne troops and naval forces *via* Black Sea (Ibid., p. 197).

The long-awaited Anglo-American landing in the Balkans did not take place, and at dawn on 20 August 1944, the Soviet army launched the *"Iaşi-Chişinău"* operation on the Moldovan front, with not only a clear numerical superiority but also a crushing superiority in tanks, air force, heavy artillery etc. (Duţu, 292). Under these conditions, the Romanian efforts to resume contact with the Allies and to break away from Germany were precipitated. M. Antonescu was considering the possibility of flying to Ankara, to conclude the armistice, which is why, on the morning of 23 August 1944, he discussed with Suphi Tanriover (Giurescu, p. 198).

Since Ion Antonescu, although convinced of the need to give up the alliance with Germany, continued to procrastinate and condition this act, after a long series of preparations, on 23 August 1944,

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King Michael I, exercising his prerogative as head of the national armed forces, ordered the dismissal and arrest of the marshal and his main collaborators, announcing, by a radio proclamation, the cessation of hostilities with the states of the United Nations Coalition. The unilateral character of the act from 23 August 1944 (the non-existence of an official previous bilateral written agreement on the armistice) created a very confusing situation on the Moldova front, where a large number of Romanian soldiers (between 130,000 and 180,000) were taken prisoners by the Soviets, between 24 August and 5 September 1944 (Giurescu, coord., pp. 462-463).

As Soviet troops continued to attack Romanian military units in the Danube Delta and acts of aggression by the Germans increased, aware of their technical superiority in the coastal sector, General Costin Ionașcu, commander of the 9th Infantry Division, and Admiral Horia Măcelariu requested and allowed the German land and naval forces in the Constanța area to withdraw peacefully; they headed by road and by sea towards Bulgaria (Duțu, pp. 307-308). Between 24-29 August 1944, Romanian military forces in Dobrogea disarmed more than 10,500 German soldiers (including a general and 400 other officers), took over and maintained firm control over the coastline and the route of the sea Danube, kept intact the sea and river port facilities and communication routes, including the famous Fetești-Cernavodă Bridge (Ibid., pp. 313-314). However, by 5 September 1944, Romania's navy was virtually captured by Soviet forces (Ibid., p. 314).

Among the most important consequences of the act from 23 August 1944 was the disintegration of the German machine in South-Eastern Europe. The *Wehrmacht* was forced to evacuate, within about nine weeks, the territories of Bulgaria, Greece (including Crete and the Aegean islands), some parts of Albania and the eastern half of Yugoslavia (Giurescu, p. 258).

August 1944 also marked the hastening of Bulgaria's efforts to leave the alliance with Germany. On 14 August, Stoičo Moşanov was sent on a mission to Istanbul, together with the industrialist Gheorghi Kiselov, to make contact with representatives of the USA and Great Britain, to sign an armistice that would prevent Soviet occupation (Račev, pp. 260 et seq.) On the very day of 23 August 1944, the two Bulgarian emissaries met the USA and British Ministers plenipotentiary in Türkiye, seeking guarantees for an Anglo-American military presence on the territory of their country (Ibid., p. 269).

The events in Romania quickly convinced the Bulgarian government to intensify its approaches to the USA and Great Britain, given the fears, which were to be proved justified, about the attitude of the Soviet Union (Liddel Hart, p. 261). Between 24 and 31 August 1944, the Bagrianov-Draganov government repeatedly asked Germany to withdraw its troops from Bulgarian territory, even warning of the possibility of opening fire against them (Miller, p. 204). At the same time, on 26 August, the withdrawal of the Occupation Corps from Serbia (but not from Macedonia) was announced, and on 30 August, Moşanov was again sent on the mission, this time to Cairo, where he arrived on the 1st of September (de Launay, pp. 246-247). According to Bulgarian historical sources, the number of German troops on Bulgarian territory at the end of August 1944 was 22,000, stationed in 220 establishments, to which were added almost 30,000 more, hastily withdrawn from Dobrogea and other parts of Romania (Ilčev, p. 594).

The Bagrianov government's hasted actions had no practical effect, as they ended up being ignored both by Germany, which neither withdrew its troops from Bulgaria, nor initiated acts of hostility, and by USSR, which accused the Bulgarian authorities of duplicity and refused to send negotiators to Cairo, where Moshanov quickly realised that the Anglo-Americans were not at all willing to disagree with the Soviets cause of Bulgaria (Račev, pp. 276-282).

Under these circumstances, another Bulgarian government was sworn in at the beginning of September, under the leadership of Konstantin Muraviev. The new Council of Ministers was generally made up of personalities linked to British, French and Belgian business circles (de Launay, p. 247), but the crucial position of Minister of War went to Ivan Marinov, who kept secret but strong connections with the Fatherland Front, a left-wing coalition established due to the initiative

of the Bulgarian Communist Party (BKP) two years earlier (Taşev, pp. 278-279).

Marinov undermined Muraviev's diplomatic manoeuvres, also by delaying the declaration of war on Germany, so that Bulgaria would not become, *in extremis*, an ally of the USA and UK, which would have suited neither the Soviet Union nor the BKP (Gauthier, 263). The pretext invoked was a rather convincing one: to avoid capture or destruction by the much better equipped German forces of the Bulgarian troops retreating from Macedonia (Miller, p. 210). Bulgaria's declaration of war on Germany was issued on 6 September 1944, but it allowed for a 48-hour delay before it came into effect (Ilčev, p. 595). The day before, however, the Soviet Union had declared war on Bulgaria (Mateeva, Tepavičarov, p. 270). Officially, on 8 September 1944, Bulgaria was therefore at war with Germany as well as with the USA, Great Britain and the Soviet Union, a situation relatively similar to that of the Romanian troops on the Moldovan front immediately after the Act of 23 August 1944.

As Soviet troops entered and advanced into Bulgaria, several regiments in Varna and Burgas revolted against the Muraviev government, which lead to the arrest of pro-government officers (Miller, 215). At dawn on 9 September, with the assistance of Ivan Marinov, Prime Minister K. Muraviev and his close collaborators were arrested, and a government of the Fatherland Front was announced on Radio Sofia under the leadership of Colonel Kimon Georgiev, with substantial participation of the BKP (Ibid., p. 216).

Like Romania's act of 23 August 1944, the moment of 9 September 1944 in Bulgaria preceded the formal conclusion of the armistice with the United Nations. In both countries, the precipitous break with Germany coincided chronologically with the beginning of the Communist seizure of political power, the difference being that Bulgaria had completed in seven days (2-9 September 1944) a journey that Romania was to complete in six and a half months (24 August 1944-6 March 1945).

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Among the acts initiated by K. Muraviev, under his short-lived government, it's worth mentioning the dismissal of Ivan V. Popov from the position of Bulgarian Minister in Romania. The former head of Bulgarian diplomacy took his own life on 29 October 1944 at the Colentina Hospital (Taşev, p. 376). Since Romania had left the alliance with Germany at a time when Bulgaria was preparing for a similar gesture, the events of 23 August 1944 did not result in the severance of Romanian-Bulgarian diplomatic relations, as was the situation between Romania and Hungary.

Three weeks after the effective exit from the alliance with Germany, on the night of 12/13 September 1944, in Moscow, the Armistice Convention was signed between Romania and the United Nations Coalition. Among other things, this document provided for the nullity of the Vienna Dictate (29/30 August 1940) and the restitution of all or most of Northern Transylvania to Romania, without any reference to Southern Dobrogea (Calafeteanu, coordinator, pp. 341-342).

At the end of the first decade of October 1944, Winston Churchill and Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden visited Moscow, where they held talks with their Soviet counterparts, I.V. Stalin and V.M. Molotov. It was in this context that the famous Soviet-British percentage agreement on the spheres of influence of the two Great Powers in the South-Eastern European states was concluded. The Soviets obtained recognition of their preponderance in Romania (90%) and Bulgaria (75%), countries in which the Red Army was already established, and the British retained their preponderance (90%) over Greece (de Launay, p. 295).

In the case of Bulgaria, too, the formal conclusion of the armistice with the United Nations Coalition states was delayed even longer than in the case of Romania, namely until 28 October 1944, because of *"compromises and concessions resulting from the Anglo-Soviet proxy agreement of October 1944, which reflected the new balance of political and military power in the Balkans"* (Chiper, 2007, p. 331). Due to the initiative of the USSR, accepted by the USA and Great Britain, the text of the Act of 28 October 1944 included the stipulation that Bulgaria

should evacuate the occupied territories of Greece and Yugoslavia, and not *"the territories of the allied states currently occupied by Bulgaria"*, as originally proposed; thus, the issue of Southern Dobrogea was categorically removed from the discussion (Ibid., p. 332).

The traditional Russian-Bulgarian affinities and the speed of the communisation process of Bulgaria made this country a confident ally of the USSR, towards which Romania was not opportune to come with territorial claims, especially since the USA and Great Britain had, since 1918-1919, viewed with great understanding the Bulgarian claims over Southern Dobrogea (Ungureanu, 2009, pp. 63-66) In addition, the ethnic data in the Quadrilateral had been greatly changed in favour of the Bulgarians, following the population exchange provided for in the Treaty of 7 September 1940 (Ibid., pp. 383-384).

CONCLUSIONS

The outbreak of the German-Soviet war on 22 June 1941 found both Romania and Bulgaria in the Tripartite Pact. However, the specific differences between the two South-Eastern European states determined that Romania became substantially involved in the anti-Soviet war, while Bulgaria maintained its neutrality between the two totalitarian giants. In December 1941, both states, allied with Germany, went to war with the British Empire and the USA, underestimating the importance of this act.

The general change in the evolution of the war, particularly on the Soviet front in the winter of 1942-1943, led, especially in Romania, but also in Bulgaria, to the initiation of some diplomatic steps to avoid falling under the influence of the USSR, through an armistice with the USA and Great Britain and the establishment of an Anglo-American military presence. This was an illusory goal, given the geopolitical realities, but also the military and the political-diplomatic developments worldwide. Despite some initiatives, especially Romanian ones, coordination between the two states was not achieved, mainly due to the over-cautious attitude of the Sofia government, especially after King Boris III death (28 August 1943).

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As a result, Romania's and Bulgaria's withdrawal from the German sphere of influence took place almost simultaneously, on 23 August and September 9 1944, respectively, as the Red Army was advancing impetuously. In both cases, the act was haste, after a long period of hesitation, partly fuelled by many illusory hopes. Later, Romania would endure the hardships of Soviet occupation, while Bulgaria became the most confident ally of the new regional hegemonic power.

Regarding the *"Dobrogea issue"*, which had dominated bilateral relations for several decades, we notice, during 1943-1944, within many Romanian media, on the one hand, the evanescence of concerns related to Southern Dobrogea (the Quadrilateral), and on the other hand, the persistence of fears related to Bulgaria's aspirations for Old Dobrogea, in an international context unfavourable to the Romanian state.

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Carol – King of Romania
Issued in Bucureşti on 8 December 1897

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